

One who lost everything

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Summary: A girl named Shiro finds the Shinsengumi headquarters at night to visit her older brother, call it a late appearance however the problem is he became a rastsu and Shiro kills him for his sake but he leaves behind a secret that neither the Shinsengumi nor his sister knows. Another problem, there is a specific reason that Shiro came for her brother.

1. Chapter 1

All the Hakuouki character don't belong to me, unless it's Shiro and the other mentioned characters like Ami later on in the chapter(s)
Enjoy. ^.^

â€| means next day

.. means later that day

'_I am going to find him and KILL him!_' It was really the only thing I was thinking about until I bumped in to a tall man with short reddish, brownish hair. I completely forgot that I was walking on the Kyoto streets. "Looks like someone's sleep-walking." Strange demon as I am already I knew who he was, Okita Souji 1st unit captain of the Shinsengumi.

"Maybe it's because of the relaxed atmosphere." I said without thinking, cause everyone around me gave me looks as if I was crazy and like I was a dead person walking the streets.

"Relaxed? You must really be tired." Okita said smirking. _'Okay I don't know why, but he for some reason is getting on my nerves.'_

"Well, nice chit-chatting with you, I have to get going." Without hesitating I walked on forward not looking back, but for some odd reason I thought Okita was looking at me for a second before walking on. I was already losing track of him. My uncle I mean, he's farther

away now. _'Just great.'_ I thought to myself, the next time I see Okita and he wastes my time again I'll kill him too.

I was getting closer to my uncle; I seriously wounded him in our last battle, that's why I'm tracking him down. He killed every single person who was very important to me. My only friends were taken away one by one in my past lives. My demon main family members can't be reborn like my brother and I, they're all gone. Although this may be the last time that I'll be reborn. I stopped, in front of me was a giant rock shaped like a coffin. _'This is it. The last moment he will live.'_ In my palms I generate lightning as I aim and strike the rock. The bright blue light shone, almost blinding, then quickly fading with the sound of a shock.

I waited, nothing. Nothing else happened, this is too easy. A deep troubling feeling slithers in my chest, something seems to be lurking nearby. I can see his ashes in front of me, yet why is he easier to defeat now? A few meters back I hear leaves rustling in an unusual way, confirming my other suspicion.

"What? Missed me?" I said in a mockingly way. Walking out from the bushes Okita asks "Are you after the Shinsengumi captain Kondou-san?" _'Why is he asking me this question?'_ "No." I said, my amber eyes were showing that I wasn't lying. He relaxed a little bit before saying,

"No one's actually bumped into me especially with that kind of explanation." He stopped talking for a while, "You're different." At that exact point I felt the need of drawing my sword, but then there was a strange howling in a distance. Before I could figure out what is was, Souji was already running. He wasn't running away from the howl, he was running _towards_ the howling. And I had a feeling he knew what it was.

As I followed Souji he led me to the Shinsengumi headquarters, I stopped following him at the entrance and noticed a few more people were there already. Probably just some more unit captains, but that wasn't what really caught my attention. A man with white hair and glowing red eyes appeared out of the house, he looked like he has been awake for months.

"Get ready to attack!" a man with long black hair ordered. Hijikata-san. Just when everyone was about to attack the man he seemed to be looking my way.

Something struck me like I've seen this man somewhere before. It hit me, _Kosu! My older brother._ He died years ago, but now someone must have raised him from the dead. Kosu then starting moaning my name,

"Hashiro, where's Hashiro?!"

It seemed like his blood-curdling voice was becoming normal, while this was happening I heard gasps. When I peeked over he no longer had white hair or red eyes, he still looked sad but he changed to his former self, short dark brown hair and dark amber eyes. "She's here I know it." His eyes remained sad, but yet calm and searching.

My heart is starting to feel heavy, I not really happy that he is alive. It could still mean he's under someone's control. My legs all

by itself starting walking towards Kosu, when he saw me he looked so happy as he tried to hug me; I stepped back. Kosu didn't look mad or upset, he was just calm.

"You what are you doing here?!" Hijikata's voice boomed.

Then Kosu's face became pale he looked like he regretted something. "Hashiro, I'm sorry none of us were there to help you. No, what am I saying? We _chose _not to help you when you were little. Can you ever forgive us Hashiro?" He said with such a saddened tone.

"It's okay. It all already happened it couldn't be helped." I say, trying to console him.

Kosu looked even more depressed. Just then he looked serious at me. "Shiro do you now the man who woke me from the dead?" My mind was starting to go round and round. "Who? You mean uncle? I am sure I just killed him." He looked at me warningly,

"Look out for Keinei he'll be around in replacement of uncle. He definitely has something up his sleeve." Looking even more frustrating Kosu snapped his head down, growling and grabbing the sides of his scalp. A dark blue light surrounded Kosu then he became a monster once more, he charges towards me as I ready my weapon; a katana. Slashing his left shoulder I whispered, "You are a good brother." In shock he froze falling to his knees before looking to Hijikata, "I'm sorry I couldn't do more for the Shinsengumi. Vice-Commander Hijikata. But please, let Hashiro , let her stay with Chizuru. I beg of you." Kosu gasped, his skin becoming paler, with one last glance he smiled "I wish that you'll be blessed with happiness." The sun rose over the horizon, his body the same color as grey and falling apart flew into the wind. No. this isn't what I wanted. To see my only precious brother die such a death.

"Hey, how did you find this place?" Harada asked. "Easy, instincts." I answered absentminded. "So you're Kosu's younger sister?" Souji was asking. I glanced at them and walked away. "You all would do well to stay away from me at this point, you're all my enemies."

"Oh, so you're so afraid of us that you want to run away is that what you're saying?" Souji was as cocky as ever. I didn't stop walking, "To think that a sister of the strong and mighty Kosu would just run away." Now Souji was really getting on my nerves!

I thought for a moment and said back "I _am strong. Strong _that I can even restrain the largest beast no matter how powerful, I wield the ability to do things you humans can't imagine. But then what is your strength? Just fighting and killing? Easy to believe that it's what some of you enjoy doing. But if you value your comrade's lives, then value an enemy's for it is possible that someone could be protecting their lives as well. You know nothing of me so leave me be and stay away." Everyone, even Souji stood in silence as the wind blew against them.

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The streets were busy again that morning, I couldn't sense Keinei's aura. _'So he isn't here.'_ For a while now I've wanted to take a break from searching, but before with my uncle alive he always kept me busy. I decided to sit by the river in the evening when the sun

was setting.

"I didn't think a person like you would be here." Souji somehow found me without me realizing it.

"I told you to stay away." I say in a low, threatening tone. _'I didn't want to feel that feeling to protect someone again, something always goes wrong. They always end up dead. The curse of my demon clan still weighs on my shoulder alone. That's what makes it hard to keep a friend or to love your family members.'_ I drew my sword, clashing it against with Souji's.

"Why did you just say that we are your enemies back then?" Souji asked.

"It is none of your business." I stared coldly at Souji. "Calm down, I don't remember doing anything to you that you had to declare me an enemy. What's your problem?" I reply, "Like I said 'it's none of your business!'" pushing away Souji's sword as I make a cut on his left arm, leading to Souji kneeling with a clutch hand over his wound.

Through his seeping blood I can see the bacterial infection, tuberculosis, and that the illness is still eating him from the inside. Out of the little kindness that remained in my heart I stood over Souji using my 'healing hands' to cure Souji of tuberculosis. "What on earth are you â€|.?" Souji asked wide eyed, but started coughing. Slowly the bacteria disappeared, my hand resting on back. Even I made this decision on my own I still couldn't believe I've just healed him. I even healed the cut on his left arm. A strong urge came into my hands, I wanted to strike his face, I had a strong feeling of something but I can't explain it. Fortunately I stopped myself before doing anything rash.

"Tell your commander and friends to stay away from me. And if you don't mind I'll do the same." I didn't even realize it yet but my voice was little shaky. I started to walk away when â€| "You shouldn't have turned away from your opponent, Shiro!" Souji exclaimed, piercing something cold and sharp into my back. It didn't really hurt; I've been through more painful things than that.

"Then I was right. You Shinsengumi didn't come here to protect peace did you?" Souji paused for a moment. At that second I lost sense of what I was supposed to concentrate on looking for. And Souji was right I shouldn't have turned away from my enemy, because the man Keinai appeared out of nowhere and with a silver ragged weapon, he cuts my on my right arm. This kind of knife can kill any human within a minute but for my demon clan it can give us severe headaches and sometimes it could kill us. I held on to the place where he cut me, it's already burning. Keinai then for some reason aims for Souji.

In a matter of seconds I swiftly kick the knife out of his hands, reaching the knife without hesitation. Slicing him back with the knife Keinai steps back his body instantly turning into stone than dust.

"What just happened Shiro? Who was that man that tried to kill us a second ago?" Souji asked in confusion. My head felt dizzy; losing my sense of standing I feel the world violently shaking, waiting for the impact of hitting the ground I instead feel strong arms catch me and

feeling my forehead. Looking surprisingly shocked Souji muttered, "You have a bad fever." Souji then turns around and carries me on his back to where the inns are. The steady movement of his paced walking lulls me to sleep.

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The feeling of light onto my lids, I open them quickly blinking to adjust form the immense light. I find myself in a room with a towel on my head, I touch it. My fever probably came down because I started to feel better. I walked out of the room wondering who brought me here. Before I could remember my answer Souji shows up in the hallway with the other unit captains. "Someone's awake. So how was your nap?" Souji hadn't sounded so kind to me before. Instead of enjoying it I feel worried. When I am healing from a wound like last night I become weak like a human. The headache pain was coming back to me, but this time I hear screaming like someone's in pain. It makes my head hurt more as I fall to my knees. _'Guess that the headache isn't over yet.'_ "Shiro!" I only heard them saying my name before I see the shadows close in.

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I woke up in the room again, this time everyone was there even the vice-commander and the commander himself. "Feeling better?" It was Harada asking. I sat up observing the room, "Just a little. Why all of you guys here are anyways this isn't the Shinsengumi headquarters?" Hijikata cleared his throat, "Souji told us what happened so we came to check on you." Somewhat ignoring the answer I started to stand up a bit.

"Wait what are you doing you haven't fully recovered?!" Heisuke questioned.

"I obviously can't stay here forever, besides I already told you guys are my enemies now. There's no use staying anymore." I start walking outside of the inn, the sun was brighter than ever either that or I was in the dim lighted places too long. Finally the headache went away for a while I started running far from the hotel, the Shinsengumi, but mostly from Souji Okita. I couldn't stand the idea of staying with them. All I can do now is run from them.

I ran to the forests once more. Tired from running for what seemed like hours I rested against a tree in the shadows. Gasping uncontrollably my lungs ache, like all my organs will liquefy and burn me. My eyelids became heavy; eventually I close them fall asleep once more.

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(In Shimabara)The town was full of geisha houses when I walked down the road. Something stopped me though, the Shinsengumi. I sensed their presence near from where I was standing. A man said aloud "Hey I think it's the girl the Shinsengumi are looking for. Shinsengumi I found her, the girl!" I was still too tired from all the running even now, within a minute the Shinsengumi surrounded me I couldn't escape this time.

They took me to the forest area again and stopped when we were out of sight from others. "We're sorry Shiro." Surprised by the apology I

just nodded showing that I was listening. I started regaining strength as soon as the apology ended. I dropped the bomb "I still hate all of you!" I yelled, it was the only thing I could think of that would probably start to make the Shinsengumi hate me, of course it was mostly lame. "How could you use my brother like that?! Even I'm sure that he wouldn't want to become a monster since we already are ourselves." This for me was good I didn't want them to know what kind of life my demon clan has put me through, that nice part of me will always be torn apart from me. As a full blooded demon female I couldn't really experience love, and happiness. Even if it were to happen it will once again be torn away from me, like my 'old' friends. They all died a painful death that not only scars their memories, it tears me apart piece from piece. "But...but why do you hate us Shiro? We didn't know what happened to him until he ran out of the house." Heisuke probably looked even more shocked than me.

"Why is my brother so loyal to you jerks?! After what I've seen you expect me to just ignore that he died a pitiful death and live on as normal? You're all cruel, that's all you are. I was told that you were supposed to protect the peace yet you don't you all just lie!"

Fed up with their persistence I push through the captains, trying to keep running far. Honestly it's tiring and pathetic. How long have I been running?

"What's your true reason for saying those things to us?" Panting in pain I lean against a nearby tree, not caring anymore that Souji managed to catch up to me. Echoing screaming of people continue to replay in my head.

Souji walks up to me with a smile. While I stare into his emerald green eyes he swiftly pulls my bangs away from my face.

Never have I felt the need so strong to push someone away from me. Before I could act Souji pulls me close to him, embracing me so kindly I thought I was dreaming. "Souji, ugh let me go." I tried pushing away from his arms but he held on to me tightly his strong arms bound me to his chest. Then he said into my right ear "What are you embarrassed because I'm holding you? Or is it that you've gone mad and fallen deeply in love with me just by hugging you?" '_Okaaay, holding me for the moment is strange but hearing those words out of his mouth is starting to scare me!'_

After a moment of thinking hard I thought of something to say, "Souji, are you in love with me?" He paused for a while,

"Maybe I do maybe I don't, what's your answer for me?"

I paused for a while myself, I couldn't think of the answer. In my mind the screams still remain which interferes with my thinking of the answer. I try to hide the pain I'm feeling from the headache, instead Souji gently peck me on the forehead with his lips and let me go. "It's alright you don't have to tell me yet." Okita thought for a moment adding, "I'll only give you two days to think about my question. Okay?"

"Alright but Souji what would you do if I didn't have an answer?" Souji's smirk became wider. "Well then I'll just have to steal you

away from where ever you are and make you my servant." Souji was teasing me I know it. Souji was starting to laugh at this point, I tried to make an angry face but I somehow found myself laughing along with him.

My heart felt something familiar, love and happiness once more broke through the cold invisible walls I created to keep them out. I didn't want to have any sort of relationship with Okita or the Shinsengumi, none. Quickly I pulled out my sword and aimed for Souji's torso. Before contact Souji pulled out his own katana and easily blocked my attack. "What are you doing Shiro?"

The screaming and pain in my head only increased leading to me fainting and falling again. "Ch!" Souji had to think fast which kind of made me feel a little guilty, he caught me again before I made contact the ground. "Just what were you thinking?" My eyes hardly open I say "Souji just leave me here." But Souji wouldn't hear of it "Are you insane? Even a person like you could die out here." Souji says his face now somewhat serious but worried.

I reach for his face and stroke his cheeks gently; Souji grabs my hand and puts it against his chest. "Shiro, why did you attack me?" I look at his solemn face and answer "I can't tell you all of it yet. But know that I have my reason for each action I make." Souji scowled, "Why? Shiro tell me." I could only smile my strength was that curse getting weaker again. "Can you guess?" I whisper before closing my eyes, exhausted from pain.

Souji still looked confused. "Guess?" Slowly Souji carried Shiro to a house that was abandoned not too far from headquarters.

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When I woke up I was pretty surprised he didn't take me back to the Shinsengumi headquarters or to that same hotel. "Why here?" I moaned slightly.

"It was the only place closest to Shinsengumi headquarters." Souji gives me a look. "But man Shiro, you're really keeping me busy getting a fever and fainting like that. Do you hve an illness?" I blush a little

"Sorry I couldn't really help it."

"Yare, yare Shiro, You just don't have luck do you?" Souji asked with a face told me that clearly spoke he is still worried for me.

The urge to close my eyes came again and it was getting harder to keep them open. Souji leaned past my face.

"No, you need to rest. Just relax," he paused for what seemed like hours and finally continued in a whisper, "I'll protect you Shiro I promise." Unable to resist sleep I choose to let the darkness take over.

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For what was probably hours or even a day I felt a hand running across my forehead, slowly I open my eye lids. "Oh, you're finally awake Shi-ro-chan." Souji gave his smirk again with such a familiar

touch of concern. I giggled at how he said my name in such a way. "Hmm, what is it?" Souji asked raising a brow looking confused this time.

"Have you gotten an answer yet?" Souji looked more confused again and replied "I still don't understand what you're telling me. Were you saying you're not after Kondou?" Letting Souji's question echo in my head I realized that it was night time. Bursting up to sitting I panic, "Souji what about the Shinsengumi?! Wouldn't they be looking for you by now?" I started panicking wondering if Souji would get in trouble since the Shinsengumi meant the world to him. At least that was what I could tell from his thoughts of the Shinsengumi.

Souji just looked to a corner of the room and smiled "Yeah Hijikata-san or Kondou-san has probably already asked Saito-san or someone to look for me. He might have already set out a search party."

I straighten up "Oh, Souji you really _don't_ have to look after me anymore, you should just go back to the Shinsengumi and forget about me," I paused, even thinking about the word it still pained me "forever." "Ya know I was really just kidding? Hijikata-san and Kondou-san probably is still worried that I've gone for two days or so but I'm sure they'll figure that I'll still come back." I slowly try to stand up, but it turned out that I haven't completely healed yet so I stumbled a bit then falling. Quickly reacting to me about to fall again Souji stood up and supported me by putting my arm over his neck and holding my waist. Souji sighed with his eyes closed "Shiro you exert yourself too much no wonder you have a headache." Souji teased.

Then Souji went back to his question. "Shiro you still haven't answered my question yet." It was Souji's turn to remind me. I look down trying to think of an answer to dodge his question, but Souji was back to that serious look that wanted an answer truthfully. I sighed this time, "I call it a curse because Kosu and I have been reborn a few times already, our purpose is to kill our uncle. I'm sure he's dead along with his servant but since Kosu died as well I don't know what to do anymore. I'm not even sure if our uncle is dead." Souji's look softened. I scrutinized at Souji, "Don't tell anyone about what I've just told you unless I say so, or if it the circumstances change you can at least tell the other Shinsengumi captains."

"Hmm, now I know why you seemed so smart. You can live for more than 1 life time huh?" I made a deeper sigh, _'It's bad enough that he knows my name and all but now I just explained to him my family curse.'_ "Yes." I mumbled. Souji leans toward my way again but this time he gently puts his lips on mine. My eyes open wide for seconds as I tried to push Souji away. Souji stopped, his smirk became wider taking firm hold of my right wrist. "So I take it that you like it when I kiss you huh?" Souji half teasingly said. I realized that I was blushing even more, I turned away quick. Souji smirked wider "Embarrassed?" I scowl then slyly smile

"Hmm, you might want to think carefully Souji, we demons can read human minds if we try." Very surprisingly Souji just replied,

"Really? That means I can put you to good use then demon

girl."

"Okita!"

"I was just kidding Shiro no need to get worked up." Souji looks straight at me with his emerald eyes. He pushes me down on the futon remaining on top of me. "S-Souji?! What are you doing?" Souji answers by gently kissing my neck, his warm breath so close my body starts to get a little hot.

"Souji stop this." I demand.

I start pushing him back. "I really mean it Souji _**stop it**_!"

Souji smiles and gazes me in the eye again "You have to tell me how you feel about me first." My face feels like its burning. _I think I'm blushing even harder. _"I don't, you also said I didn't have to tell you yet." Unsatisfied Souji lightly kisses my neck then paused and whispered into my left ear "I won't stop until you admit it Shiro. You know I was just lying about that?" He makes lip contact again. I shut my eyes and mustered all my strength to push Souji away which didn't work since Souji's probably 3 times stronger than me in this state. I've never felt so weak before.

Souji continues to kiss my neck, slipping his fingers into my hand that tries to push him away, pinning my hand down making it even more impossible for me to escape. Souji stops and whispers into my ear again "Do you have an answer yet Shiro?" he sounded so demanding. "Iâ€¦Iâ€¦ don't know." I've never felt so embarrassed in my life either. Souji evilly smirks "I need to hear a confession Shiro. Or do you want me to take away your innocence tonight?" As shock as I am I've seen or heard about this side of Souji. "You're only a friend." I answered quietly. "I didn't hear you Shiro say it louder." Souji commanded. I didn't dare repeat what I just said, so I stayed silent.

'_Why? What's going on in his head!?' _Souji didn't look convinced but lies beside me.

"Geez Shiro you're no fun at all." Souji complained.

I am beyond furious, "Souji that was cruel! You dummy, you meanie, you stupid pervert!" I blurt.

Souji looked calmly at me, "You said a while ago that you could read minds if you try, do you remember that?" I paused; I didn't think he would bring that up. I stare into his eyes and read what he thought the moment he started hostile act. My eyes widened my eyes a fraction as I found my answer.

"Know yet?" Souji asked while gracefully stroking my cheeks.

'Souji , of course you are in love with me.' "I wanted to protect you, and see you no matter who you were. When you healed me of the illness so that I could fight with the Shinsengumi again. I felt indebted yet intoxicated by you acting strong and prideful as a samurai would, no, not a samurai but a lady of noble birth."

Souji stopped his face made an expression of sincerity and love; it

was something I've never seen in a man like him. I started to cry a little. The hot tears of joy flowing as Souji held me closer to him. "I said this to you before and I'll repeat it again..." Souji leans toward my ear once more, "I'll protect you Shiro." Arm in arms we held each other for the night. Then we both fall asleep, embracing each other.

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It was dawn; the sun was still rising from the eastern horizon. I looked at the entrance of the empty house; Souji was standing to a side of the entrance while tilting his head up looking at the dark blue sky. I get up and walk to him. "Ah! You're awake." I look at him, the one who said that he'd protect me. I stare deep into his eyes. "Did you mean what you said last night?" Souji smiled at me answering "I wouldn't say things like that if I don't mean it. And if you tell anyone what I said to you last night I'll kill you." He finished with a somewhat of a scowl just not exactly. An expression telling me '_be careful what you say' _knowing that I figured what it meant. If I ever told anyone it may not only embarrass him but me as well.

I sigh lightly. "Souji you're just one of those men who can't really be understood right away," I look at Souji again. Gracefully I step closer to his side leaning on his shoulders and whisper to his ear "but I understand you better now, don't think that it'll be easy hiding things from me at this point." Leaning forward off the wall Souji stands there looking at me while giving me a look that indicates that he couldn't possibly care if he can't hide his feelings, his lips curving into a gentle smile then slowly disappearing. "It's about time I go back to the Shinsengumi, Shiro you're coming as well." I stare bizarrely at him, "What?! _Why?_" _My point in the beginning was to leave the Shinsengumi. Not go back!_

"What do you mean 'why'? You have to come because we need an explanation of you saying those things to us yesterday." Without another word Souji grabs my wrist and pulls me to the Shinsengumi headquarters where all of the captains came to greet us. Hijikata was surprisingly the first to speak to us, "Souji! Where in the world did you disappear to?! And why is Shiro with you?" Kondou was the second, "Ah Souji you're back. I was getting worried since you were gone for nearly two days." Smiling in a relieved way he patted Souji on the shoulder. "Geez, Souji you've never really left us for that long before. Were you sick or something?" Heisuke asked. With all the questions and statements my head begins to hurt again.

Hijikata then said that there would be a meeting about me now, wanting to move on from the greetings I blurt out.

"Finally!"

Dead silence followed for a few long minutes. "Eh?" was the only thing I heard from Heisuke before we all assembled into the meeting room. "So Souji why did you bring Shiro here to headquarters? She already confirmed us enemies." Souji smirks and looks at me while seeming like he was holding back a laugh, "Well Shiro said that she was sorry for her rudeness before and said that she wanted to politely apologize to all of us with a proper explanation."

Instantly everyone was looking straight at me with piercing questioning eyes. Even they knew not to completely trust Souji with things like this. A sudden burst of anger, confusion and embarrassment came out of me. "That's a lie, Souji's lying! He forced me to come with him he dragged me the whole way here!" I guess I sounded really mad because everyone including Hijikata backed off a bit. I didn't want to stay here a minute longer there was one thing I could only think of saying.

"I'm sorry." _Now I wish I actually would have said something else.
_"Uh, did she mean it?" Sanosuke questioned cautiously.

"See, didn't I tell you she came to apologize?" Okita said teasingly.

I couldn't stand it anymore. I stand up, open the door and walk out. Who did they think they were? I thought as I walk the floorboards to the exit. "Wait Shiro! Agh, wait!" I stop and look back. "Heisuke, what do you want?" I could hear him panting as he came closer. "Shiro I'm really sorry if we made you mad, but" Heisuke stopped halfway due to his panting earlier. I guess I walk really fast.

"But Shiro please stay. We all really want you to stay here."

"And why exactly!?" I retort.

I mean I guess_ some_ of them still want be friends regarding what I said to them earlier. The footsteps thudded through the hallway. "Shiro can't you stay? I think you'd actually fit in." Heisuke begged. "Is that all? Anything else? Why are all of you still clinging to me? Was it because of Kosu?" My eyes narrowed at them.

"Well, there's that Shiro but it seems that you want to," Kondou trailed off. I think I've been too kind already, I finish what Kondou was about to say.

"To what?" I ask. Hijikata gave me a long glare.

"If Shiro doesn't want to stay then let her go. We don't have any business with a person like her anymore." "Hijikata-san that's a little mean." Heisuke mumbled under his breath. I think deeper, I don't know if I should stay. "C'mon Shiro. Your skills would be an asset to the Shinsengumi." Souji says. I glare at him, "How would you know anything about _my_ skills of fighting?" I hissed.

"Is it really that hard to guess? Aren't you Kosu's little sister? You know he's an excellent swordsman. I can only guess that you might have inherited his power of fighting is all." I look at everyone. I sigh deeply. "I guess I can stay for a while." "Awesome! Shiro's staying with us!" Heisuke exclaimed in excitement. "Good of you to join Shiro." Harada then rustles my hair. "I said for a while." I repeat. "At least you'd be staying here. I think you'd be a great ally." Kondou stated.

"Hey why not let Shiro spar against someone to determine her strength and if she should really stay here?" Nagakura you can be a pain in the neck.

"Sure that's a great idea but who should Shiro spar against? Hmmm, what about Saito-san? How about it Saito?" Souji you're an even more pain in the neck.

"Alright." Saito replied calmly but sighed to himself.

"C'mon right now I wanna see Shiro fight." Hearing Heisuke saying this makes me worry. "Do any of you know my level of fighting skills?" "There's no need to hold back Shiro, just spar." I don't remember asking Nagakura though.

"I will not hold back on you Shiro." Saito walks onto the stone dirt ground on one side of the courtyard. '_Better get this over with._' I walk onto the opposite side and get into my position. Saito on the other hand is just standing there. Right, he probably fights in a different technique than others. His swords are worn on the right meaning he's left-handed. _No problem, my ninja skills along with swords are nearly impossible to beat. I trained years like swordsmen to perfect my skills. _

I ready my sword into position; I was the first to attack. But the ninja skills I learned were to fight quietly and quickly making this a deadly fight even for Saito. In surprise Saito was able to block my first attack which is mostly the strongest. He stepped back a few paces before charging towards me. I parry his attack on my torso and aimed for his shoulders. Quickly he parries that as well. The both of us were moving swiftly and fast through air. His dark, calm, blue eyes looking into my dark brown eyes not missing a moment to try to cut each other down.

Knowing if I keep on _clanging_ against his sword we'd probably get to nowhere. I jump back a few spaces and disappear. Saito didn't look as shocked as I thought he would be when I appeared behind him and stop at his neck. He just gave me a slight smile and said "Well done. You were stronger than I expected." I smile at him "Never underestimate your enemy."

"Whoah Shiro I can't believe you beat Saito-san. You're amazing!" Heisuke complimented. "Thanks." "You were great Shiro I've never seen anyone beat Saito-san before."

"Well, yeah I was training really hard when I was 4 years old." Instead of everyone saying 'Wow you actually started training that early?!' everyone just looked at me blankly. "I didn't know Shiro, how was the experience?" Harada asked. Just realizing what I said I froze in terror once more. The memories came back, flooding like a raging, violent river. My eyes wide open for the split second.

"Oi(hey), Shiro you okay?" Heisuke asked in concern. My senses came back; I gently shake my head and nod. "I'm fine" I pause, "why are all of you so nice to an outsider all of a sudden?" I questioned seriously.

"Well, you're siblings with Kosu one of our greatest warriors. You're not really an outsider." Kondou reassured me. "When you say 'not really' I take it that I am still considered an outsider no matter what huh?" I say with no emotion. Figuring what he said,

"Ahh, well, I didn't mean it that way Shiro. It's justâ€|ah" he

stopped. "Let me guess you all think I'm still nothing but a person who knows none of the warrior way am I correct?" I look at each of the Shinsengumi captains, my eyes searching their soul. "Gah?! Stop that Shiro you're freaking us out!" Shinpachi yelled.

"Hmm? So I can leave? I think I want to change my mind." I simply thought. "Wait Shiro you still haven't told us your apology yet." Souji teased. I give him a rotten cold stare. "Oh, so you still hate us? You're a hard woman to figure out Shiro." Souji said. I could have sworn he sounded like he was pitying me, in his own stupid worthless way. I am fed up with how Souji keeps on teasing me. Strolling up to Souji with a cold look I quickly swipe both of his swords away and ran off onto the courtyard.

"Ah? Hey Shiro give them back!" Souji shouted.

"You gotta catch me first if you wanna get them back!" I shout in response.

Already Souji was on the courtyard running my direction. Now I'm not a fool, I can tell Souji probably runs from Hijikata every once in a while (or maybe even every other day) because he might have just stolen a certain poem book or replaced it with a fake. So Souji may be good at retrieving his katanas. Reaching for my arms which hold his beloved tools for killing I dodged his attack to claim back his katanas and ran fast behind him. "You really gotta run a lot faster than that to get me slow poke!" I teased back at him. He glared at me coldly, attempting to try again. "Missed me you missed me." I mock making Souji even more irritated.

"Alright already just give back my katanas Shiro!" I stop in my tracks and give him a quirky smile.

"Then hurry up and get me already! You're too slow for your own good!" I called back.

Souji finally approaches me still glaring but down with a little embarrassment. I hold out the swords as he took them back. I fake an innocent smile, "You're so slow. I actually thought you would have caught me a long time ago, well it's seems that I was wrong." I say while shrugging my shoulders giving him the oh well look with my eyes closed.

"I had no idea you could run that fast I almost couldn't see ya there Shiro." Shinpachi complimented. Although it was a compliment it really didn't feel like he said anything important. The sun has already passed over our heads to late noon.

"Time passes by." I mumbled. "What did you say Shiro?" I look at Saito in the eye "I said 'time passes by.'"

"What makes you think about time right now?" Souji asked. I look at the deep light-blue sky as it becomes darker smiling somewhat peacefully.

"Time is everywhere, whatever is going to happen each second in the future is unknown able to change with just a slight action yet the few seconds that past cannot be changed becoming permanent." I say to Souji's question. "Is that so? I can't imagine you to think about something as dense as time." Souji joshed. "***Stop** teasing me

Souji! You're so annoying." I partly say under my breath.

Howling comes from a distance, everyone looks tense and runs out to the entrance. "Shiro you stay here!" Kondou commanded.

"But I can-" Hijikata interrupted me,

"It doesn't matter if you can protect yourself this doesn't have anything to do with you just stay here in headquarters, don't go into anyone's room that's an order you got that!?"

"Yes sir." I muttered.

Soon I was alone in the quiet headquarters. I stretched my arms and legs. "Ahhh, stretching in a long while has never felt so good. Now what should I do to occupy time?" I ask myself. Putting my two fingers up to my chin. I wander around HQ exploring each corner carefully since I was kinda set up to stay here thanks to Souji and Nagakura for the idea of sparring Saito. Around half an hour later they all came back but there was a girl with them dressed as a man. "She saw too much already don't you think we should just kill her?" Souji asked in an eager way.

"We'll discuss what to do with her tomorrow morning so quit you're complaining Souji!" Hijikata scolded. I trotted over to them "What did she see too much?" I curiously ask. Kondou stopped in his tracks along with Nagakura and Heisuke, all three of them saying

"**He's a girl**_?!" Their eyes looking like they'll pop out any second. "Of course_ she's a girl." Souji commented. He's the one carrying her.

"Ahem! You guys still haven't answered me yet. Since you guys turned my big brother Kosu into a monster I deserve an explanation! And I want one right now!" I held my ground I just had to know what the Shinsengumi captains were hiding. Hijikata deeply sighed in frustration. "Alright we'll tell you once this girl's tied up in the vacant room." I nodded and everyone headed straight to the meeting room, everyone but Souji.

2. Chapter 2

(Later in the meeting room)

Hijikata began speaking, "Before Kosu turned into that monster we call rasetsu he drank a glass vile that had red liquid inside it. The liquid was able to give anyone who drank it abilities to heal faster and to become stronger, yet this came with a devastating price. In return for the strength of the abilities the liquid called 'the Elixir' makes men go crazy for blood. They will be okay to be around as long as there's no blood." "I see." But Hijikata still looked at me furrowing his brows.

"You must absolutely not tell anyone else what you just learned. Know that if you do we will kill you without hesitation. Only the Shinsengumi's top captains know about this." I take in a long inhale and exhale before stating "You don't have to worry I'm not some sort of blabber mouth that goes around telling people secrets anyways. By

the way if you guys ever try to kill me let me just inform you Shinsengumi that you all would fail at that simple task."

"We're not that blunt Hashiro." Hijikata said. Then I wander my gaze onto Kondou, he looks as if he doesn't want me to know but yet wants me to know about the elixir. "I never said you guys were now did I?" I purposely make a yawn. "Ah geez it's already getting late, if you all don't mind I need to sleep." "Wait there isn't any more rooms left here." Harada called after me as I opened the door. "Well then I'll go find an inn or somthin'." I reply back to them. I take a look at Hijikata. "What is it Shiro?" He asked strictly. I smile teasingly at them, "I was just wondering why you called me by my full name is all." "Oh" I heard Hijikata mutter under his breath. "See you all tomorrow." I said before leaving. Silently I close the door.

Nighttime came as I approach a cozy looking inn. It seems to have big enough rooms to sleep in. When I was taken to my room I summoned a giant scroll unlocking a section which has a better kimono to sleep in. After changing and sealing up the scroll I lay down on the futon falling asleep. The next morning I walked around the town looking at the shops until I ran across some rogue samurais harassing a father and son. The father looked afraid but the child stood tall. A rouge samurai seemed to be holding a pouch. "Give us our money back thieves!" the boy almost commanded. "Eh? How dare you call us thieves you little brat!?" one of the rogues said unsheathing his katana. In fear the boy closed his eyes while the rogue samurai came charging, luckily I ran over grabbing the arm of the samurai flipping him to the ground with a loud thump. "What the heck are you doing girl!?" Another of the rogue samurai asked. "I was just assisting these two people. You're the rogue samurai right? Shouldn't guys like you be helping innocent people?" I ask with a taunting voice. "Hey how dare a little girl like you say that to us!? We worked our butts off trying to protect Kyoto for the emporer and now you're insulting us?" I look at them. "How sad." I say under my breath. All three rogue samurai excluding the one I just attacked unsheathed their swords running my way. Quickly and quietly I slip behind them striking their shoulders making them unable to move. "What the?!" one of them said while lifelessly-like falling down to the ground. I grab the pouch and hand it over to the father who seemed to be in a slightly better mood.

Bowing politely while giving him his money I say "Sorry for interfering sir I just had to help, my apologies." He looked at me with a kind but scared face. His hand quivered slowly reaching for his pouch. "T-thank you." He said before running off with the boy. Everyone around gave me faces of somewhat amazement and terror. I heard a woman saying behind her sleeve "My, my that young girl was able to beat the rogue samurai. She must have immense strength how fearsome." I give her an apologetic face. I walk toward her; little by little she tries to walk away looking shocked. When I was in front of her I bow down "I'm sorry miss if I have frightened you. As you all can see I can fight very well but I promise not to use it against anyone here who isn't being cruel to another." I give her a warm comforting smile. She smiles back. "I guess I misjudged you for that I am sorry myself." She said nodding. "Thank you for understanding ma'am." I say with one last glimpse of people looking calmly at me.

"Hey! Don't forget us girl!" A rogue samurai shouted. _I'll leave

them here_. I walk away farther. I'm glad they don't think I'm a demon. _Since I am one._ I was starting to think that I might like this place, but yet I ran into Harada with his unit. "Oh, Shiro come over here." Harada cried. I walk his way. "What is it?" I ask a little irritated that I somehow seem to keep running into them. "We need you back at headquarters. We're all heading back now." Harada explained. I take a deep breath and exhale. "What do you guys want? I'll stay here in town, I won't leave unless you guys really want me to or if I have to go somewhere for an emergency." "That's not really the point. Well, the rest will be explained later when we arrive at headquarters." Harada said while rubbing the back of his head. "Alright I'll come." I say.

(At headquarters) "Shiro it's good to see you again!" Heisuke greeted. I smile "Yeah, I guess it's kinda good to be back." I reply to his greeting. "I didn't think you'd come back Shiro." Souji teased walking up to us. Saito came as well "We need to go to the meeting room. We still need to discuss what to do with you Shiro." Saito says looking my way. All walking together the same girl from last night opens the door for us. I'm betting is Chizuru Yukimura. "Thank you Chizuru." I say to her. Looking shocked like everyone else since no one told me her name yet. For my kind of demon clan it's almost normal for us to know your name without being told or asking you. It's really only a shame that I'm the last one.

"H-how did you know?" Chizuru asked. "Instincts." I say once more. Closing the door behind us I look at Sannan, Hijikata, and Kondou. "Good to see you again Shiro. Ahaha, although we saw you last night it feels as if it's been longer." Kondou says while laughing. I jump to the point. "So what do you guys plan to do with me?" Looking sternly as ever Hijikata answers, "We plan to keep you here along with Chizuru sitting over there." Hijikata said gesturing toward Chizuru. "Since the both of you are girls we figured it would make more sense. You could be a warrior fighting with us in battle if you want to; by the way Shiro do you have any medical experience?" I answer "Yes, I was also trained for a medic as well. I am considered an expert in nearly all areas such as science, astronomy, fighting, chi blocking, casting spells and sealing spells, summoning items, keeping secrets, socializing, acting, eavesdropping, housework, cooking, playing music and so on. Almost everyone who knows me well calls me a genius."

Everyone looked at me surprised of my knowledge I'm guessing. "Wow, Shiro you really know a lot of stuff." Harada complimented. "Excuse me," Chizuru called from the back. "I-I think Shiro should join the Shinsengumi, I also would like to know you more Shiro." Chizuru finished, but is blushing a bright light pink color. "Hey Shiro, come to think of names how come you and Kosu didn't tell us your guy's surname?" I froze before sighing. "It's not really allowed in our family clan that we say our surnames. It makes it dangerous for descendants to live in peace and keep our identity a secret." "Shiro exactly what do you mean by that?" Shinpatchi asked. "Our demon family suffers much more than any of you here can ever think of. My demon clan is very different than most common demons, we're stronger and some more cold hearted, we possess more knowledge and power, for example someone in my family can be the gatekeeper or leader of Hell where the dead stays. But we pureblooded demons have the hardest life to live than those with some human lineage because of the full demon blood coursing through our veins. For now that is all the information I can trust you Shinsengumi captains with. I will tell you guys more

if I can truly trust you all." I say calmly.

With a long pause Chizuru admitted something I already knew when I made eye contact. "I-I'm an oni." Chizuru admitted almost whimpering. "What's an oni?" Heisuke asked. "Oni are also demons but clearly different from my kind, her injuries can heal within seconds and she can unleash power when in a very angry mood. Our wounds heal as well but the differences are the powers and status compared to each other." "Don't tell them that much Shiro!" Chizuru blurted. I slyly smile, "Don't worry Chizuru, I can erase their memories including yours if I want to." I say in a casual way. "Wait what?! You can erase minds?! You're not going to do that are you Shiro?" Heisuke said while standing up cupping his head with his hands in a frustrating way. It somehow seemed funny, I lightly giggled. Everyone stare at me wide eyes some of them are even blushing a little. "Shiro's so adorable when she giggles right Shinoachi-san?" Okita asked. Which I was sure he actually meant to embarrass me. "Uh?" I mutter my head tilting to the right.

"Ahem," Kondou cleared his throat, "So Shiro will you stay here at headquarters sharing the room with Chizuru?" I could tell they all wanted me to stay. "Please Shiro I really want to be good friends with you." Chizuru begged only making me regret trusting them. But I think again, to the time when I met my first best friend. She was so kind to me and in return I did the same, we felt like family until the fire. Burning red and orange. Everything's burning! Noo! No Ami don't go! Don't die, please, please come back! Crimson blood all over me, the death aura, the rotting place, it reeks of smoke, and pain. One person saw this and survived. Me. "Hey, Shiro. Shiro are you okay?!" Chizuru asked with concern written over her gentle face. At this point everyone was surrounding me with serious and concerned looks. I nod. It was becoming the evening again. I stand up, "Okay I'll stay here, it's getting late and I'm tired. Chizuru can you show me our room?" "Hai(yes)!" Chizuru exclaimed smiling.

Walking me to the room took only a minute or two. Once Chizuru opened the door I walked in and sat down on the right side of her futon. I summon the scroll again and heard Chizuru gasp loudly. I press my hands gently on a mark in the middle of the scroll, popping out was a futon. I close the scroll and lay on my futon. "What? Didn't I tell you that I can summon items?" "Aah?! Yes!" I smiled relaxing. Just a minute later I hear Chizuru's voice echoing a bit, whoops I'm reading her mind. 'Shiro-chan looks so beautiful and kind when she smiles. (exhaling) I wish I could smile like her. It seems everyone thinks she fits in. I do too but then why?' "So you think I look beautiful when I'm smiling?" I teased. "Agh, you can read my mind?!" Chizuru exclaimed in surprise and shock. I started laughing softly, seeing Chizuru embarrassed also looked funny. 'She's cute too even when she laughs!' "Chizuru do you honestly think that whatever I do is cute?" I joked. "Shiro-chan please stop reading my mind!" Chizuru said while blushing a darker shade of pink. "You don't have to use honorifics on my name Chizuru." I say looking a little serious.

"Oh, and sometimes I don't realize I'm reading minds so my bad he he sorry Chizuru." Chizuru smiled slightly tilting her head to the right. "It's okay. You seem like a nice person Shiro." I close my eyes "I guess you can say so. C'mon it's getting late let's go to sleep Chizuru." "Hm, okay." After Chizuru changed into a lighter yukata we both went to sleep peacefully dreaming.

In the late afternoon I helped Chizuru with lunch for everyone. Sitting in the dining room made me feel a tiny bit uncomfortable. "Is something wrong Shiro?" Hijikata asked more trustingly. I shake my head no. "I'm just not used to eating with people that much is all. Otherwise I'm fine." Smiling warmly at everyone in the room. "Ah, I'm so happy that Shiro and Chizuru-chan are staying here. They both can be very fine helpers around this place." Heisuke said heartily "Arigato Heisuke-kun." Chizuru said smiling back at the young man around our age. "The place seems a bit livelier when you two are here." Sannan added. Last night I have been having weird dreams though, I dreamt of the Shinsengumi dying. All of them, not in war or battling, someone murdered them. Instantly uncle's face shows for a spit second. 'What? I didn't kill him?!' I thought to myself. "Hey Shiro you look a little pale are you sure you're okay?" Harada questioned. I slowly stand up "I think I just need some fresh air. That's all." I bowed and walked to the door opening it, only to see Souji standing there. "I didn't know you two were up. How come no one told me?" Souji asked, smirking while pouting. "I just didn't want to see your face every single minute of my life." I say out loud. "Is that so? Shiro-chan that's mean." Souji teased. "Please don't use honorific on my name Souji." Chizuru gasped thinking 'Shiro is already calling Okita-san by his first name?' I turn to look at her. "Well Chizuru I'm more used to saying first names than surnames, but I can call you guys by surnames if you prefer." I reply to her question. "Shiro I thought you said that you were going to stop reading my mind?" Chizuru exclaimed. "Chizuru like I said, sometimes I don't even realize I'm even doing it." I say making a motion with my hands raising them up and then using the left hand fanning it their direction.

"You told us you could do many things but you didn't mention reading minds!" Heisuke shouted in surprise. "Yeah, yeah you all don't have to shout. I can hear you all of you guys nice and clear." I say irritated. "How interesting, I can't wait to learn more about you Hashiro." Souji said. I can tell he's trying to irritate me more, but I let it slide. "Well it seems you're all done eating, if you don't mind I'm going for a walk around town. I'll be back around early evening." I walk to the entrance of headquarters waiting for everyone to gather. "I'm off." I call back. "Don't stay out any later than early evening Shiro!" Hijikata warned. I smile "I can protect myself." I say before leaving.

(Kyoto streets) When I walked down the streets of Kyoto I've gotta admit I heard a lot of bad rumors about the Shinsengumi or the 'Mibu wolves'. When people say in a whisper behind my back I hear my name being mentioned along with the Shinsengumi. Instead of looking scared and disgusted they gave me faces of pity. It kinda annoys me when people think I can't handle myself just because I'm a girl. It was getting late, the streets were nearly empty I turn around and walk back to Shinsengumi headquarters. On the way though a man with blonde hair came toward me, I sensed he was a pureblood oni like Chizuru. "Hmm your aura seems unusual. What is your name girl?" He asked with a calm low toned voice. From my demon instincts his name is Chikage Kazama. "My full first name is Hashiro but everyone usually calls me Shiro." I answer politely just because he was an oni. Demon to demon. He looks straight into my eyes, he's trying to learn more about me with his demonic power. "You are obviously not a human, and not exactly an oni," Kazama pauses. "But you are also valuable, maybe more than a pureblood female oni." I give him an innocent confused

face. "Never mind that. What is your full name Shiro?" I ignore that question and keep walking. He turns his head my way almost glaring, "You dare walk away from someone like me when I'm asking you a question? You're poorly trained in manners." I stop for a moment looking back at him glaring then continue walking forward. Before realizing it Kazama was in front of me holding my chin up to look at his face. "You surely are aware that I can take your innocence this moment now, right?" After staring into my eyes he smiles and bends down lower toward my face! Instantly I push him back and decided to teleport to headquarters rather than run there.

I never thought a male oni would act that way. I thought to myself. I was pretty shocked I certainly didn't want to see him again anytime soon. "Oi(hey), Shiro you're back." Shinpachi said, sitting with Harada and Heisuke on the steps. "Hey Shiro found anything interesting while walking the streets?" Heisuke asked. I dramatically shake my head, "No I unfortunately didn't." I say adding a quiet sigh. "Hahaha! Shiro you're funny!" Heisuke complimented again slowly stopping his laughter. I heard a quiet pair of footsteps. "Oh, welcome back Shiro. You came back a little later than we thought; we were getting worried about you." Chizuru explained. I smile "Yeah walking the streets were so much fun I almost forgot I had to limit my time there." I say jokingly. "Well you better come back earlier if you want to go back walking tomorrow Shiro." Hijikata said scolding me a little, _where did he come from?_ "Hai, hai Toshi you're so strict. You remind me of my sensei back when I was training as a ninja." I teased winking. "Oh, Shiro you were trained to also be a ninja, that's so awesome." Heisuke said amazed. "Yeah he was always dragging me through the hallways to the training hall whenever I slept in and he'd always say that I need to work harder and have a brighter will of fire. Hmm," I say, just remembering the happiest memories in the world made me remember the worst. The first time I had amnesia and remember they said I fell into a coma for some time before awaking and _trying_ to get used to the horrid memories. I sigh deeply "Now I kinda miss him. He was actually the nicest sensei compared to the others." I sadly continue.

Unable to bear anymore memories of that time I quickly changed the subject. "So have all of you captains been together for a long time? You know, like childhood or so?" I ask wondering what they would say. "Actually, yes most of us have been together for a very long time, we're almost like family." Kondou replied he was right next to Hijikata looking at Souji and him while saying this. "Family huh?" I whisper to myself. "Pardon what did you say Shiro?" Kondou asked. I slumped down putting my elbows on my knees. "It's nothing. I was just thinking, no matter how happy some people are they've been through many hard times. Over the years I realized this is very common around those who are supposedly happy." Silence followed for a while. The sun escaping view slowly hiding behind the horizon as the colors of light pink, purple, medium blue, and dark blue appear in the evening sky, darkening more to see some stars shining already. "It's getting late maybe we should go inside and rest for the night." Harada suggested. Standing up with Heisuke, Shinpachi and Souji. The captains were all standing and seemed to be waiting for us to go as well. "I'll just sit here for a little while longer. I like being under the stars." I answer to their blank faces. Their looks went to Chizuru who was standing a few feet behind me. "I-I'll stay with Shiro for a while too." Chizuru said, blushing again and settling down on the opposite side of the steps. "If you say so, but neither of you two will run away got it? Stay here if you want but go to bed

soon." Hijikata said while walking with everyone else. "Tsk, tsk, Hijikata-san you worry too much for them. If anything went wrong Shiro's there to help right Shiro?" Souji asked looking deep into my eyes, sensing that he was a little worried for me as well. I nod "Yeah I can take care of myself I'll be fine." I say assuring. Soon enough everyone but Chizuru and I were alone gazing calmly at the little stars shining above our heads.

"Chizuru aren't you tired?" I finally asked from the long quiet moment. Chizuru smiled sheepishly. "Just a little. You?" "Nope not at all tonight." I say with confident. It was getting later. The bright 1st quarter moon shone down nearly exactly above us. "It's really late you should go to bed Chizuru." I say. Yawning a little Chizuru nodded, slowly getting up so she wouldn't fall or trip she started heading back to our room. A few yards away Chizuru stopped looking confused "Shiro, aren't you going to bed too?" Chizuru asked tilting her head which looked like she fell asleep standing up. "Oh, I'll be coming. Just go to sleep I promise I'll come soon." I say staring straight into Chizuru's dark brown eyes. Nodding again Chizuru went on ahead. After she was completely gone from sight I quietly sighed to myself. But an urge of a familiar presence approached. Kazama! I quickly run smoothly against the cool air and go through the entrance trying to lead Kazama away. I stood on the empty street of houses. Kazama appeared before me as planned. "What do you want?" I asked coldly. "I just wanted to confirm if you could be a replacement for Chizuru." I feel shocked but I don't show it the slightest bit. He teleported in front of me taking a strong hold of my left wrist, I squirmed and twisted trying to get away from his grasp. He was surprisingly stronger than I expected. "You're coming with me." He said smirking.

I aimed for his shoulder hitting it lightly. His grip loosened. I break free. "How dare you Shiro." He said in an annoyed tone. Trying to move his right arm and fingers, but failed both his arm and fingers were completely useless for the moment. "Don't mess with me! I can completely defend myself besides who would want to go with you?!" I fiercely say. "Hmm, maybe Chizuru is an easier target to get than you." He muttered. I slightly giggled, Kazama looked at me confused yet calm. "What's so funny?" He asked. "Uh, nothing." I answer. I stop giggling when he smiles. I get in my stance, he quickly appears behind me. Taking caution he holds me from behind across my stomach, keeping my arms tightly at my side. _How could he use his right arm already? Even a demon would be numb for nearly a whole day, but his armed was back to normal within a minute!_ "It seems we've underestimated each other. Now you're coming with me." He repeated sternly. I try to get loose but he wouldn't let me this time. Finally I stop, I start gasping a little tired. Just then a man with dark red hair appeared, Kazama lets me go instantly. "What are you doing here Amagiri?" Kazama asked sounding irritated again. "I came to get you we have to return our favors to the Satsuma clan." He reminded.

Kazama looked at me. "Make sure you and Chizuru keep your eyes open." He said, and then they both disappeared. As I walk back to headquarters I wondered how he knew I was with Chizuru. Arriving at the entrance I go straight to the room lay down on my futon and sleep.

(Morning) It was already bright outside, Chizuru was out of her futon, it was already made. I changed into men's clothing like

Chizuru and walked outside. The men seemed to be training each other they're all the units together in a courtyard; I have to say there are a lot of them too. I walk in the dining room when I heard that they were moving to a bigger headquarters. I opened the door sitting outside. "Shiro come in, you need to hear this too." Hijikata said looking at me for a while then back at Kondou. I nod I see Chizuru was in here too next to Heisuke, I close the door. "For us to be able to hide Sannan-san we need a bigger headquarters." Hijikata announced. I think for a little. I gently hit my right palm. "Toshi I have an idea of where you guys can stay." I say full of confidence and somewhat happiness.

"Really? Where Shiro?" Kondou asked with some desperation. I smile wide "One of my mother's best friends has a giant mansion very close on the outskirts of Kyoto." I answer. "That's great Shiro, but will your mothers friend be okay with us in their home?" I nod. "He's alright for people like you guys to come no matter how many of the Shinsengumi would be in his home, under two conditions. You Shinsengumi will not mess with his belongings around the house unless it's meant for guests such as pillows blankets and so on, and if you all would at least have some manners for him, his wife, and their heir don't forget the servants either. Now I just need to go a day or two earlier to get the mansion ready for all of you" I say. "Oh this is just great Shiro, you've been really helping us. Thank you." I politely wave my hand 'no', "Actually I didn't do much." "Nonsense Shiro, by helping us move to a bigger headquarters it can help us with hiding Sa.." "You're too loud Kondou-san." Hijikata interrupted. "Oh yeah sorry about that Toshi he he." Kondou sheepishly rubbed the back of his head. "Who are you guys going to hide?" I ask hoping they would answer my question "We have to hide Sannan-san to protect something important." Hijikata answered. "Oh I see." I simply say.

"Alright since Shiro has a place for us to stay as new headquarters we will move there in two days." Kondou announced. I stand up walking toward the door; I stop and look back before opening the door. "Well, I'll be on my way to prepare the rooms. Do you guys want to share rooms or separate for each person?" "We can share rooms." Sannan said. "Okay." I smile wide again and go.

(Two days later) "This is awesome the place is huge!" Heisuke shouted. "Thank you once again for telling us about your mother's friend's home. We hope we won't be a bother here." Sannan thanked. "Yeah? Well, save that for Akio Okura he's the one who actually owns the place." I say making an embarrassed and the _no wait don't say thanks to me _face.

"Alright then when can we see him?" Kondou asked. I think before saying, "If you want to you guys can see him right now. He's in his quarters, his son is out training and I believe his wife is with him." "Okay then let's go meet him. I truly hope this won't be too much of a hassle for Okura-dono." Kondou apologetically said. I gesture for them to follow me as I lead them through the mansion's hallways. We arrive at his room I kneel down in front of the door, "Akio the Shinsengumi commanders and some of the unit captains are here." I called before opening the door, revealing him sitting in front of his desk with a beautiful woman at his side.

'So that must be his wife.' Harada thought. Telepathically I say back 'Yes she is his wife so don't go flirting with her whatsoever ya hear

Harada.' He jumped a little staring back at me only to see me smiling mischievously looking way. "Oh, so these people are the commanders and unit captains you've been telling me about huh?" Akio said turning from his desk facing the Shinsengumi and bowing slightly to show respect. "Oh please don't bow before us Okura-dono we should be the ones bowing to you." Kondou waved his hand midair saying 'no please sir it really should be us bowing to you.' But Akio just laughed "Oh, Kondou-san it's not like I'm a lord. Really I'm just like a man with a giant house I don't hold up such a high status like the shogun. I am just glad that Etsu's daughter was able to meet you Shinsengumi all of you seem to be suitable men for friends." He said, catching me flinch when he said my birthmother's name. "Ah that's right Shiro, I'm sorry I forgot." He looked at me concerned. That's because only close friends such as Akio know that my family clan was wiped out and that the killer my uncle who is probably still alive. "What does he mean Shiro?" Sannan asked. Even Akio's wife looked a little depressed. I look up at him and the rest of the Shinsengumi. "I will tell you the details once I know that I can fully trust all of you with my family's secrets and actions." I answer as if I would fall to pieces if they asked more. Kondou feeling the dense atmosphere he tried moving on with a different topic. "Ah, Okura-san, I wanted to come here to thank you on behalf of everyone else for letting us stay here as headquarters. We all appreciate it." Kondou bowed down low showing his gratitude. "Raise your head Kondou-san I am glad to help any of Shiro's friends. We all help support each other that's what best friends are for is it not?" Akio asked in a slight happy and jokingly way.

"Ah, Yes. Yes that's what friends are for." Kondou answered sheepishly rubbing the back of his head once more. Then the attention came to me with the Shinsengumi. "There's you and Kosu as siblings are there any more Shiro?" Shinpachi asked. I shrug. "I can't remember if I had more siblings, I was sure I had an older sister as well. But I can't remember if it's true, I can't even remember most of my family. Really I only met Kosu and an uncle that's all." I reply. "I get it now Kosu was the one who told you about your family right Shiro?" Harada questioned. I simply nodded I don't particularly like talking about family matters. "Oh now that I really think about doesn't Shiro's name mean 'samurai male'? If it means a male samurai how come it's Shiro's name? I mean I know that Shiro is a great samurai and we just call her that but why is it Shiro instead of her full name Hashiro?" Shinpachi asked. I glance at Shinpachi and stared down to the floor before looking up "My full name Hashiro was made up by my mother who wanted a unique name but a name within it like Shiro. Merely adding 'Ha' to 'Shiro' made it interesting and different. But I heard that the syllable 'Ha' was added since people have been judging us as horrible beings. I was also told that my mother knew I would have great skill of a samurai even though I was a female so she wanted to compliment on the samurai, the male part of the name was for how I act more like a guy than a girl. And in a different language Shiro means 'it's bad'. That word connects more to the family curse than me, leading it to be my name representing the family." I explain. "That's something I never knew about just your name Shiro." Harada said.

Seriously wanting to move from the subject already leaking too much info to the Shinsengumi I throw in a topic to talk about for a short time. "So Kondou, do you Hijikata, and Sannan want to say anything else?" I look questionably at the commander. "Please move onto a new topic to talk about!" I repeated in my head nearly screaming. "Oh

yes. Ahem, Hijikata, Sannan and I on behalf of the Shinsengumi are thanking you for letting us stay in your home. We hope that we will not be a nuisance." Kondou repeated smiling proud thinking about his strong men. _'Dang it I'm reading minds again!_' Akio smiled back. "I'm sure none of you grateful warriors will be any problem. My son will be happy to see something different for once; he always complained that the house was 'too dead silent' and that 'the house could be a meditating area of silence.'" After saying this Akio laughed heartily. "I wonder what his expression would be like if he came home today only to see men with swords filling the house." Akio calmed down soon to a sigh. I laugh as well. "That's sounds just like what he would say." I nearly felt like I was dying, it was really easy to picture him saying something like that. "Make yourself feel at home, although please tell your men not to break anything in the house. We don't want it to be a hassle for the few servants working here." Akio welcomed again. _'How could such a wealthy looking man be so kind?_' Hijikata's voice echoed. _'Why can't I ever prevent myself from reading minds?!_' I yelled at myself in my head.

I stand up "Well I'll go and help prepare dinner with the servants. Call me if you need me." I say before disappearing from the room. The men looked at each other and decided that it was about time to walk out. Akio's wife looked full of joy. Standing up by her husband "Our son is coming home soon. We should go greet him along with the Shinsengumi." She smiled. Akio and his wife including the Shinsengumi captains and commander went along with them to see their son. At the gates they waited for a short moment. "So what's your son's name?" Shinpachi asked, breaking the silence. Akio's wife Hiroko Okura answered politely "His name is Takumi-kun. He's a son that can be mischievous at times." Hiroko smiled wider, "Here he comes."

A young man about Shiro's and Chizuru's age around 17 years old came walking toward the gate wearing a dark blue hakama over a cream white kimono, his hair shoulder length black and blue, and his eyes were dark brown and dark purple. "Heyy-," was all he could say before he noticed the Shinsengumi in their haori with his parents. Right away it snapped into him. "So our house is going to be the Shinsengumi's new headquarters?!" He asked amazed. Then he snapped his fingers closing his eyes for a second "I bet Shiro helped am I right? Speaking of which where is Shiro, I haven't seen her in ages?" He puts the side of his index finger to his forehead using the hand to block off the sunrays as he peered at the group. "Sorry Takumi Shiro's helping with cooking dinner right now. But you'll see her soon." His father answered. Takumi dramatically faked his despair more like he was joking, but he did miss seeing Shiro and playing together. Such as messing with the rogue samurai whenever they cause a ruckus or perhaps steal money from the rogue samurai, fortunately the two children never got caught due to the samurai's drunken behavior. "Aww man I was seriously hoping to see my best friend again after all these years." He drawled. But there was a sudden voice behind everyone. "Hey guys' dinner's ready- wait, is that you Takumi?! Oh my gosh you've changed tremendously. You look so different." Shiro exclaimed. "Hey Shiro nice to see you again for over 6 years. I can say the same to you though; you look more like a samurai wearing those clothes." Takumi said pointing to the hakamas and kimono Shiro's wearing. "Seems like your name really suits you." He teased yet complimented. "Ha ha very funny. C'mon let's talk more in the dining room." Shiro said leading everyone to the dining room where almost everyone was eating to their delights.

Takumi looked around, "Man it's finally good to get some noise around this place." Takumi said looking at his father who looked at the Shinsengumi. "See what did I tell you, he's tired of the 'dead silence' around here." His father said almost laughing again. His son made a look of relaxation while carefully leaning against the door. "Yeah I told you this place needs to be filled up with people, Shiro I really owe you one." Takumi winked at Shiro making her giggle. Everyone soon sat in their places for dinner. Eating the newly cooked rice and the deliciously smelling meat on everyone's tray, the room getting hot from all the food and the excitement the men was making. "So Takumi tell me what did you do these past years? Do you still play pranks on the rogue samurai?" I asked. "Nah, not as much. It's more fun with two people doing it, it completes the set." He said smiling at Shiro. "Hey what do you guys mean by 'pranks'?" Heisuke asked looking curious along with the commander and the rest of the unit captains.

I giggled, "When Takumi and I were young we hated seeing the rogue samurai causing such a fuss every day, then Takumi thought of a plan to annoy the rogues. I wanted to join him in his game; so we followed most of them almost everywhere it was so hilarious when we 'accidentally' kicked and punched them hard enough that you'd hear a loud thump on the ground like an earthquake. And while they were falling the two of us would snatch their pouches of money and dangle it in front of their faces. We even tried throwing dango and food on them-" I stopped, both Takumi and I were laughing really hard, close enough to crying. Everyone looked blankly at the two of us but Akio, Hiroko, and some of the servants they just looked at us, sighing. "Oh, Shiro, ha-ha remember whe-when I hit the bull's eye on one of the rogues face?! He looked like he got barfed on!" Takumi asked still laughing with me losing his breath. I continued slowly calming myself down "We pranked the rogues so many countless times we actually became famous around town." I say. "Yeah, and even some of the towns people helped us by giving us more food and information about where the rogue samurais were hanging out lately." Takumi added. "I wonder, over the years did they forget us?" I ask looking straight into Takumi's dark blue-purple eyes. He chuckled "Actually we still have a legacy. The rogue samurais now still look alert at the rooftops and corners and some of the townspeople still ask me when you and I were gonna pull the pranks again." He answered.

"Aww, that's just great how some of them still remember us." I smile at the thought of samurais looking nervous at each turning corner. "But things have cooled down quite a bit." He said looking a little sad. Then the both of us have a smirk on our faces. "Wanna pull the pranks again? They'll never see it coming." Takumi invited. "Of course, it's been forever!" I loudly say. I look at the commander and unit captains. "Hey, do you guys want to come along? It'll be fun." I slurred. Souji, Shinpachi, Heisuke, Kondou, Harada, and Sannan looked willingly at each other. Hijikata, Chizuru, and Saito were the only ones who didn't seem to want to come. "Aw, Come on Chizuru, Saito, Hijikata. I'm serious it's going to be fun. It won't hurt to have fun once in a while. Only showing up with us once won't make you guys that popular as Takumi and me." I stated pointing at Takumi, he's doing the same thing. "Shiro's right Saito, Hijikata. From their laughing earlier it sounded like a lot of fun. Chizuru's coming too you know." Souji teasingly begged.

"Eh?!" Chizuru shouted. "Alright if everyone's coming we're performing the prank tomorrow. So be ready at dawn." I announce.

Hijikata looked at Akio and Hiroko, glaring in a way yet confused. "You let your son and Shiro pull these pranks all by themselves?!" he asked a little furious, not wanting the Shinsengumi to be kicked out because of his outburst. Saying this to Akio only made him raise his hands up defeating and teasingly like. "Trust me Hijikata-san, if I could I would stop Takumi and Shiro from pulling those pranks. But you see, when you put yourself in between those two when they're determined it's impossible to stop them. They would just go right past you like a breeze and would have already performed the prank before you know it." He retorted to Hijikata. Leaving him sighing.

Dinner was over, Chizuru and I helped the servants with the dishes. When everyone was going to bed the Shinsengumi commander and captains, and Takumi and I were pretty much the only ones to stay up later. "I didn't think you had that kind of fun in your life Shiro that was the first time we saw you laughing like that with someone." Harada said in a comforting warm voice. I close my eyes, still smiling. "Well, everyone has a fun moment in their life no matter who it is." I say to Harada. A sudden weight fell onto my shoulders. Souji was leaning on my head and shoulders. "Stop it Souji you're heavy." I puff from under him. "Oh Shiro I'm so tired you'll have to drag me to my room." He teased letting more of his weight go onto my back. "Not going to happen. Now get off! And stop teasing me." I say sounding a little muffled trying to push Souji away. Kondou looked at Takumi with wonder in his eyes. "So when did you meet Shiro Takumi, back there when the two of you laughed you guys seemed really close for friends?" Kondou asked. "I met Shiro when I was 9 years old. Shiro was 9 as well. I saw her just wandering around town; I wanted to venture the town on my own at the time and did so. I was the one to ask Shiro to help me with the pranks because I noticed that she was also giving the rogue samurais disgusted looks and we were the same age. If you ask me she really did seem like a trustworthy friend. The more she played with me with the pranks the closer we became. After 5 months father discovered that Shiro was his best friend's daughter Etsu, since she visited my house from time to time. The two of us were almost inseparable back then, we were like brother and sister." Takumi explained smiling kindly. "Ah, is that so." Souji said still leaning on me. "I said for you to get off. Do ya want me to die because you crushed me or somethin'?" I ask clicking my tongue. "Maybe I'll do just that." He teased again. "Oh, hey Takumi help me out here." I call to him. Takumi patted Souji on the shoulder. "Hey I actually wanted to ask you something, come with me." He gestured Souji to follow. And he did, finally my shoulders felt light again. Takumi looked back at me "Shiro you come too. Can the rest of you guys stay there? Thanks." I jog over with them. We headed a little outside the gate then Takumi stopped walking and looked at Souji. "Souji how old are you?" was his question. "I'm 20, why?" Souji asked sounding suspicious. "Shiro have you ever accidentally or purposely read his mind yet?" I think back to the time Souji harassed me when I was healing from the headache. "Yes." I flatly answer. "Aha." He said rubbing his chin as if he was a detective. "Souji I may be 3 years younger than you but when you were teasing Shiro back there I could tell that you love her. Right?" Souji didn't exactly look shocked, more like he wanted Takumi to know. "Sure alright you caught me there." He simply answered, walking behind me and hugging me from behind. Sorta reminding me of Kazama. "Ah, Souji are you okay? I haven't really seen you teasing the others lately." I turn to look in his shining green eyes. "I'm fine I just want to hold you, is there a problem?" He looked malicious into my eyes. "Not exactly

you're just not acting the way you usually do. I mean you seem to have most of your attention on me. Are you worried about me?" I ask again. Deeply sighing Souji lets go of me "I just have a feeling that you miss me or something, it seems that some of your attention is on me as well am I right?" He smirked at me.

"Stop teasing me Souji." I repeat. "Souji are you trying to protect Shiro by any chance?" Takumi asked. While I just look confused. "Maybe why are you asking me this?" Souji questioned back. "I'm just curious about you, you say that you protect her, yet all you do is tease her. It isn't exactly what a man would do." Souji just looked at me and then to Takumi. "Well, I have my own way. Do you want me to kiss her or something?" Souji teased again. "No, no more kissing you've already done that to me Souji how could you think of doing it again?" Takumi walked over to Souji and slapped his back "Come on be a man, show the Shinsengumi your affection." He said. That time Souji seemed surprised enough. "Uah, what was that for?" he looked questionable at Takumi. Then Takumi walked my way and hugged me as well smirking at Souji as if he was mocking him. "Not you too Takumi. What's with everyone's doing hugging me?" This time I'm nervous, I've never seen Takumi act this way before. Souji just smirked back at Takumi, he walks my way too and grabs my hand. "Huh?" I stare at Souji then to Takumi. I can clearly tell that he wasn't in love with me like Souji was but I can't bring myself to answer to why he was mocking Souji. I was sure he'd never done anything like this.

"The two of you cut it out." I say almost scolding. I scowl at the both of them. "Oh. C'mon Shiro we were just playing with you." Takumi slurred. I pout, both young men released me. "Well, the next time you guys are 'playing' get someone else. You know it worries me how the two of you are acting strange." I say still making the pouting face. Which I guess the both of them found to be cute, they just smiled at me and rubbed my head laughing. "Everyone must still be waiting for us. Let's go back." Takumi said. And with that the three of us walked back to where everyone was waiting. "Did Souji get in trouble?" Shinpachi teased Souji.

Souji shot back a glare at Shinpachi. "No, nothing happened really." Souji remarked. "Ohhh?" Shinpachi slurred. "Hmph." I then smiled looking at everyone just before we go to sleep. "Okay be sure to get a good night's sleep, if you guys don't show at dawn in 5 minutes we're leaving you guys behind got that? And we'll also have to stop by a dango place who still knows us from the old days." I announce once more before dismissing everybody. Although everyone went their own way to their room, Souji and Shiro remained. Alone in the quiet hallway, empty of anyone else. Shiro gazed at the moon, "Souji, are you okay? It seems that you've been..â€|wellâ€|. I feel like you're jealous of something. You're not.." I pause and look at Souji hearing him chortle. He still looks at the ground. He smiles, closing his eyes, still laughing a little under his breath.

"I can't say for myself of how I exactly feel. It may be jealousy though." Souji interjected half way into my sentence. I keep my gaze at him. I couldn't help but feel as if he was suffering from tuberculosis again. Even though I healed him in the past, a feeling still clung to me. Like it was telling me he was still rotting from the inside. Ever since the time I healed him of the tuberculosis, I felt as if I didn't do anything to help at all, which bothered me, and now looking at his half-hidden face I feel even more worried for him. I walk closer until my shoulder nearly touches his. I try

peeking more at his face still hidden in the shadows.

He opened his eyes turning his head to look at me. Some evil flickered in his eyes, yet something else was with it. Was it really jealousy? Or could it have been some loneliness? Was it both? I couldn't tell. "What's wrong with_ you_? Are you crying?" Souji asked, in such a questionable kind manner Shiro almost thought she was imagining it. "Whah?" I frankly said. Before I knew it a tear flowed down my cheek. My eyes already felt swollen. "_You _seem to be the one who's acting strange. I always find you happy or just silent" until now." Souji stopped, he frowned looking at me.

My body felt stiff and weak, until a pair of strong yet gentle arms wrapped itself around me. Souji held my body close to his, I can faintly hear his heartbeat. "It hurts to see you like this. You look like someone broke you. Stop making that face," his hold on my body became slightly tighter. "Just go back to smiling, the face you're wearing is really making me worry for you." He hoarsely said. I hold him as well. Tears started flowing down the more I think about Souji rotting from the inside. Hiding his pain and fear all on his own, not daring to even show a tiny sign of it. This time I held Souji tighter. I could tell he made a face of surprise and pain. "Souji," I whimper. I feel him wince a bit at the sound of my shaking voice. "I'm worried. I feel like you're still...still rotting and disappearing. I don't know why but whenever I think of the time I healed your illness, I felt so afraid. It felt like I couldn't completely save you. And the more I (_sniff)_ think about it the more painful it becomes just to remember it." I sniffed even harder at the end. "Shiro calm down I'm here." Souji cooed. I calm down, feeling so sore all over my body. Truth is, either it's me who's rotting from the inside, or it's the both of us. "Shiro do you want me to share your room with you? Just for tonight?" Souji quietly asked in my ear. I nod.

"Thank you Souji." I whisper. Feeling my body being hoisted up. I smile "Thank >you." I say once again before falling into sleep. (Souji's view of things) 'Why? Shiro why did you look so scared and broken? I've never seen you that down before. What happened to you?' I walk to Shiro's room. Carefully sliding the door open with my right foot. I see her futon, carefully I place her on top of it. I walk back to close the door. Before I get another futon for the night I sit next to Shiro. I gently caressed her cheeks. "Shiro, what made you think that you didn't help me?" Souji whispered into the silent room. Standing up and setting the extra futon right beside her. '_What is this feeling to protect her?' _Souji would sometimes ask himself. Even if he knew the answer he had another feeling to make Shiro his own.

"I don't know why, but when I saw you with Takumi having fun. I did feel jealous." Souji answered Shiro in a low voice even though she was sleeping._ 'I feel more guilt for some reason. I still feel as if I can't protect you Shiro.'_ Souji thought to himself. "Well, I really hope what you said about tomorrow is true." Souji whispered one last time before falling asleep beside Shiro.

3. Chapter 3

(Early dawn, Shiro's POV) I open my eyes slowly. My eyelids still

feel heavy, not wanting to get up I flip myself over and see Souji sleeping right there in front of me! "Gah?! Souji?" I yelp. Moving so fast out of my futon I fall back down. With the entire ruckus I made Souji popped opened his eyes yawning and stretching. "What's the matter Shiro? Did I scare you?" He asked. Smirking in a cute sleepy way. "Heck yes you did, you nearly scared the living daylights outta me." I say in a jokingly way. He smiled. Getting up he walks my direction then behind me. I hear him settling himself down, and then I feel his arms around me again bringing me close to his half-exposed chest.

His chin on the top of my head, his body close to mine, I try to break free again but stop. I don't know why but now that he's holding me like this I feel a little safe. _What are you thinking?! Get any closer and he might end up like the others! _I snap back to from my reverie. My head sinks lower. "Shiro what's wrong? You're really the one acting different here." Souji asked with anxiety. I just sit for a while not doing anything. I couldn't tell him, there's no way. He wouldn't understand, he'll think he can save me. _Just like everyone else. _It's not that I don't want them to help, it's that the person or people always end up dead, no matter how strong. I raise my head and force a smile.

"What are you talking Souji? Really men these days don't make any sense." I remark. Souji eyes me a face of curiosity and confusion. He leans back letting his hands fall down his side to prop him up. "Well, if that's really what you think then so be it. Just keep in mind that I'll be watching you." Souji calmly replies. I get dressed while Souji looks the other way. "Why are you still in my room?" I ask. Souji looks up at the ceiling. "I feel as if you're still hiding something bad. So I'm going to stay by your side until you tell me." Souji happily replies back to me. I make a frown with a trace of a questionable look. I look at Souji whose back is facing my way. "Souji why are you so worried for me?" I manage to ask. Souji turns his back so that his eyes are looking at me. Smiling before saying "I feel like you need someone to be with you. No matter how capable you look you still seem to be afraid of something. It's been bugging me ever since you started staying with us at our old headquarters."

I stare at the ground. _How? How can someone like Souji, see that I've been trying to hide? Just what made him think this? _Souji turns his whole body to me still sitting down. I walk to him, then kneeling down I embrace him. Surprised Souji just sat there before holding me as well. "If you tell anyone, I will definitely kill you." I say sternly yet sadly. Souji laughs a little, "Shouldn't _I _be the one to say that?" I felt sad again, I feel so unsure of what I feel about Souji. I can't help but hold him, if he ever leaves me and never come back.

I study the early light from the rising sun, shining through the shoji doors. Light yellow and red-orange glow through. I gently push Souji a few inches away. "It's almost time for us to leave for the prank." I remind him including myself. Souji gets up, I do as well. Sliding the door open then closing it from the outside we head for the entrance. Strangely we were actually the first to arrive. A minute later Takumi came along with Heisuke. "I didn't know Souji was up too. Since when did you get here Souji, Shiro?" Takumi asked. Souji looks down at me smirking. I sigh casting my eyes to Takumi. "Actually we both came at the same time just a minute ago." I answer. "Oh." Takumi sighs stretching his arms back and folding them behind

his head. "Ah, even though it's only been a minute it feels like forever. Right Heisuke?" "A-yeah, well I guess that old grandpa's sleep in later." Heisuke laughing-like said. "Hey you weren't referring to us now are you Heisuke?" Shinpachi asked walking from the hallway to the entrance with Harada. "Who _else_ would I refer to?" Heisuke gaily asked back.

"Why you brat!" Shinpachi exclaimed raising his fist in the air. I hushed the both of them making them stand apart from each other. After a while the commander, vice commander, Chizuru, and Saito came as well just walking down the steps. I clap my hand loud, "All right since everyone's here let's go and search for a dango shop." I say. I turn walking with Takumi and Souji, both at my sides. I can't help but smile. The gang and I go to a man's dango shop half an hour later into town, as Takumi and I enter first his face lit up. "Ah, you two must be 'the children of mischief'." He says walking toward us. I give Takumi a sideways curious look, pulling my eyebrow together to make that _what is he talking about_ sort of face. He giggled a little before facing my expression "We sorta got a name from the folks we used to help back then. I guess we really have a good hold of interest." He said. "Oh, I seriously didn't think we'd get a stage name for it. I mean pulling pranks daily, wouldn't it be more of a nuisance than entertainment for people?" I ask. The man simply shakes his head. "You two were absolutely _not_ a nuisance. The two of you pulling funny pranks like that everyday helped get everyone in town here get through the day with those despicable ronin." When the man said 'ronin' his voice became cold for a second. He snapped from his odd behavior, "I'm guessing that the reason you two are here are for the dango right?" He asked politely. Takumi and I nod. "Alright wait here for a moment please." The man bowed and walked away.

"Whoah Shiro, Takumi. It seems like the two of you guys are still popular." Harada teased. Takumi shrugged. "Well, those rogue samurais were always a bother. I don't know _why_ the people in town start treating us like heroes really, but it seems that we really make a difference with our pranks. Also, the pranks not that serious, so I guess everyone wanted to try to help." Takumi casually says.

The man came back walking to us with a bundle of dango wrapped in a banana leaf. "Here you go. Good luck with the prank today." The man said smiling at us. "Yes thank you sir." I say before all of us exit the store.

As we leave the store Takumi leads us to a back corner of a different store. "Okay this is the place where they always pass by. Heisuke and Shinpachi I want the both of you guys to get some dango and hide on the rooftops. The rest of us will be on the ground, but we have to split and go to different corners of the stores." Takumi pauses flexing his fingers to his chin. "First I need the ones who _won't_ be participating on throwing the dango and noodles at them." Hijikata, Kondou, and Saito told Takumi that they would only like to watch. "Alright now that we got that settled. Chizuru and Harada go to that corner over there across from us." He pointed across the street, then giving Chizuru and Harada some dango and a bowl of steaming hot noodles. "Shiro I want you to stay here with me, now I only have to think about Sannan-san and Souji."

I take a glance at Souji, he seems to be a little upset but he isn't

showing it. "I got it hey Sannan-san, Souji, I want the both of you to go there." Takumi pointed to a store's entrance. He continued "I want you guys to go and wait in there, there really shouldn't be people who know the Shinsengumi so it will be safe. Just wait 'till the rogue samurai com walking that way. Now Shinpachi, Heisuke go to the rooftops." He reminded Heisuke and Shinpachi who are suddenly scrambling to get to the roof. Takumi nods at Souji and Sannan and the both go inside and wait while looking out the window. Then he heard a group of men walking and talking loudly. "Yeah, have you guys heard of some new group of soldiers working as the new police for the Aizu?" One of them babbled. "Oh, I heard about them, I think they're nothin' but weak garbage though." Another said. Ignoring their conversation Takumi makes eye contact at everyone in their position.

"Hey, you better be aware. The 'Mischievous Children' might come after you two." One of them said, he looked half-drunk and was nearly dirty from head to toe. "Ha ha ha, yeah like they'll come. They stopped pullin' those pranks years ago. Besides if they_ are_ children we could easily slaughter them." A man said in a drawling drunk way all of their faces tinted with pink from the alcohol. "Think again." Takumi whispers. As they walk closer, Takumi gets in a ready position to throw the dango in his hands. Takumi turns to me and winks, a cue telling me 'Go get them.' I nod back smiling. I walk from our hiding spot, as I sense the Shinsengumi's eyes at me as if saying 'Are you crazy? Get outta there!'

Luckily stopping them from revealing themselves Takumi gives them a serious look shaking his head with an expression saying 'no, don't interfere.' While doing that I walk closer to the group of drunken samurais. I put my hands behind me so they won't see the dango. "Excuse me do you men know a girl called Asa-chan? She is my sister and has run off not too long ago." I innocently say trying hard to make myself look sad and worried. "Hmmm no we've never heard a girl named that. Why are you lost girl?" The one who said that we weren't going to attack asked. "I-I was just wondering if you heard of a girl named that i-is all." I fakely stutter. _How stupid are these men? _I think to myself. "Oh, then why not come with us? We can help you look for her." He said coming closer grinning. A smile appears on my face. "Not for an eternity!" I yell mockingly I instantly raise my hand throwing the dango into his face muffling his voice. "Gahff!" he choked.

"Now!" Takumi shouts. On cue everyone throws their dango and noodles at the shocked samurais. "I told you the 'Mischievous Children' would come after us!" The man yelled only to have a bowl of hot noodles and broth falling on his head. "Let's go!" Takumi shouted. Within one minute everyone left for Shinsengumi headquarters or also known now as Takumi's home. Panting Heisuke and the rest laughed. "Now, that was fun wasn't it?" Takumi asked still panting, leaning against the gate. "Yeah, I never thought something like that would be so fun. You did great out there Shiro, pretending that your sister ran away." Harada said also half laughing and panting. Only Saito seemed to remain calm, he wasn't huffing or laughing like everyone else. I try to ignore it though.

"Ah, Shiro I didn't know you would actually fake that scene back there I started to worry about you." Kondou said. "Yeah, there has to be some bait or distraction for everyone to really be ready to aim and throw." I say still smiling. I look at Souji again, he was

smiling as well. It has been a long time since I felt like I could have fun with the people I care about.

"Well, its noon, let's go inside and have lunch." Takumi offers. "Oh yeah after all of that excitement and entertainment I'm starving!" Heisuke said out loud. "I bet I'll beat you and take all of your food Heisuke!" Shinpachi said running past Heisuke who also then started running. "Oh no you don't Shinpachi, not this time!" When the two completely disappear from sight Takumi turned around and walked the opposite way. "Where are you going?" I ask. "I'm going to visit a place." He answers back pausing when he said visit before continuing.

"C'mon Souji lets follow him." I say. But I just stand there for a while wondering to myself '_Why Souji of all people? Why did I say his name?_' Souji's voice suddenly breaks my reverie. "Alright but do you have any idea where he's going Shiro?" Souji smirks. I lightly blush, "No, but we can find out if we follow him." I say, looking over my shoulder Takumi was nearly gone from sight. "Hurry! C'mon let's catch up to him!" I hurriedly rushed Souji so that we were a couple feet behind Takumi. "Shiro you didn't have to push me that hard. Is something wrong?" Souji dart his look into my eyes. His voice is serious, and curious.

"I'm fine. I just want to see what Takumi's up to." I whisper looking away from his searching eyes. "Then why did you just say my name back there? You didn't mention anyone else's names -" Souji stops for a moment, his calm blank face turns into an evil-looking smirk. "So you've finally become interested in me huh? It took you quite a while." Souji drawled leaning close to me. "Oh, be quiet Souji. Like any of that is true." I stop to think. "You just seem to be the type of person who can follow someone without being noticed. That's why I chose you, there ya happy?!" I somewhat irritably say. "A little bit. It takes more than that just to make me happy." Souji's smirk is becoming wider. I change the subject back to Takumi. "Whatever Takumi is still moving which means we have to as well." I harshly half-scold. "Aww, you're so mean Hashiro-chan I was just starting to have fun." _Well I don't want you to have fun now we have to catch up with Takumi now! _I say to myself.

A few minutes later Takumi walks into a meadow of flowers all different kinds of colors and shapes. Souji and I hide behind a tree. "It's beautiful." I gasp kneeling down on my knees. My eyes wide open from the breath taking scenery. Souji just looks down at me slightly frowning then looks back into the field. I look up at him "Is there something wrong?" There was obviously worry in my tone.

"Nah, it's nothing." Souji simply replies back keeping his gaze at the field. "oh." I mutter to myself. I feel a little sad how Souji doesn't really open himself up much. It makes me worry, yet I don't want to read his thoughts to know his reasons. When I cast my gaze to the field I see Takumi standing there as if he was waiting for someone. A few more minutes later a girl comes to Takumi from the other side of the field. She has her black-reddish hair put into a geiko style bun with side bangs, wearing a neat pale tan kimono, she seems to be more of a suspicious character than an innocent one. "Suspicious." I mutter again. "What?" Souji asks behind me. "I'm just thinking that the girl down there is suspicious." I answer dubiously.

As the girl supposedly called Azu walks closer to Takumi she smiles and talks at the same time. It seems he's met her somewhere already.

Souji and I spy on Takumi as he and the girl talk. It lasted for nearly half an hour, Souji almost blew our cover when he decided not to wait any longer and tried to call out Takumi's name. I read his actions seconds before and prevented that by covering his mouth and dragging him down so that we actually sit on the ground. After letting my hands silently fall to my sides from the corner of my eye I can see Souji smirking. Wipe that look off your face! I scold at Souji telepathically. Only to see his smirk grow wider, ignoring his happy-teasing face I turn my attention back to Takumi and Azu. They seem to be departing. I get up with Souji, the both of us walk back to headquarters.

(Dining room) Everyone seemed to be having their own conversations again as usual, few remained quiet like Saito. Thinking I force myself to eat another piece of pork. I wasn't really hungry, not for food anyways, more like hungry for info on why Takumi was with Anzu today. I can't stop these thoughts racing around in my head. Why was he there? What was the relationship? Was 'she' the reason Takumi acts weirder now? Why didn't he tell me? Although the more I try not to think about it the more questions came to my head.

I stare at Takumi who's talking to a Shinsengumi member. Takumi soon sees me slightly glaring at him. He makes eye contact with me and somewhat motions me to read his thought by tapping his head, 'Why are you glaring at me like that?! What did I do?' I turn my head away with anger and disbelief. I quickly finish my food and leave, letting the noise of laughter, talking, and food trays wobbling disappear as I walk through the empty hallway to my room.

I open the door and close it as I enter my room. I change first into a night dress then just sit in front of a desk in the left corner from my futon. The darkness surrounding the silent room, I think to myself. I know that this time I have to make a farther connection to the Shinsengumi and Takumi. Of course Takumi knows the answer to why I always try to have distant relationships. Curses from my family are strong and persistent, they last very long (possibly your whole life) and are very cruel. Thinking far back to those cursed lives I've lived, brings back sorrow. 'Maybe I have to erase their memories. Maybe I have to ..betray them for the better.'

Deep in thought once more I didn't hear the footsteps coming to my room door. A familiar voice came from outside "Shiro you still awake?" It was Souji. "Yeah, I'm awake come in." I say. Souji enters my room closing the door behind him and sits in front of me his look curious and wondering. "It's called a night gown. I don't always wear a yukata to sleep." I answer. Souji's face changes and looks serious with disbelief, his eyes look down at the floor. I could tell something was bothering him.

"Souji, what's wrong?" I ask turning my body from my desk sounding nervous. Souji stays silent until saying "What are you thinking about right now?" I tense up feeling surprised and sad. "I'm just thinking of how I always have a good time with you Shinsengumi." I lie, smiling. Unfortunately Souji senses that, "You're good at acting that way I will admit, but I can tell that's not it." Souji looks into my eyes frustration, disbelief, worry, so many emotions flash in his

eyes. My smile dissolves and I frown with confusion. Souji gets up from his seat and walks closer to me kneeling then placing his hands on my upper arms, looking desperate. "S-Souji w-what's wrong why are you acting this way?" I timidly ask, my arms feeling numb from his tight grip. "Takumi just spoke with me a minute ago he told me how at this point you're probably thinking of erasing our memories of you. He talks about something with you regretting to meet us. _Is_ that _true_?!" Souji asks slowly shaking me.

I eyes widen '_How could Takumi betray me and tell him? Why is it 'always' Souji? Why did he tell him? Why?!_' I turn my head away, I feel like dropping to the floor crying. "Answer me. Please Shiro." Souji's voice was more desperate and stern. "I-I, I can't!" I stutter. Souji's eyes becomes more fierce and demanding.

"Why?! Why can't you tell me? Afraid that I'll tell someone else, well I won't tell anyone if you don't want me to!" Souji retorted. His grip tightened. "Souji please stop, I wish â€"I wish that I could tell you. But I can't please try to understand Souji." My voice cracked with sorrow and unbearable regret.

Souji's hands let go of my arms, he takes a few steps back and plops down a few yards from me, his eyes full of even more fury, rage, and despair. I just fall to my knees putting my hands in front of my chest to stop me from falling forward. I hang my head low, the overwhelming tears are welling up in my eyes. "Souji, I'm sorry but I can'tâ€|. I can'tâ€|.. I just can't tell you." I curl my fingers into a fist. I look up, Souji is still there, but this time he's leaning back a little resting on his left arm. "What made you become so cagey? I thought you would trust us more by now. Shiro." Souji looks at me, downcast.

I reach my hand out for him, I stop halfway. '_I don't deserve him. I don't deserve anyone now!_' I scold myself, then I just sit down again slouching low. "Souji, please forgive me." I say pleadingly. Souji looks up from the floor. "What?" In a flash I leaped over to him covering his eyes. Tears were falling out of my dark brown eyes, falling so many tears flow down my pale cheeks. I stay in my position trying to continue the process of erasing his memory. "You deserve someone better than me. Maybe if you would just â€| just forget me. You'll be truly happy." I cry, Souji grabs my wrists and tries to pry them away but I held my ground. "Hashiro stop it! I don't want to forget about you!" He stopped continuing to try to prevent the process from happening.

His grunting and struggle to stop me slows surprising me making me freeze in place from continuing the spell for erasing minds. My force weakens, my eyes widening. "What?" I whisper. Souji stops struggling and so do I, I stay there my knees apart over Souji's legs. Souji doesn't waste a moment as he grabs my right arm and drags me into his lap. Leaning in closing the space between our faces, placing his lips on mine, forceful yet delicate, afraid yet desperate I feel his lips pressed up against mine. Wanting to control me, wanting to have me. Who knew Souji would be great at kissing? I push at Souji's shoulders trying to pry away from him. But he holds me even closer, the feeling of our love grows.

The moment passes by within a blink of an eye. The tears continue to flow down my face as I hold Souji's kimono. "Souji do you really want to know? Knowing the answer may risk your lives and everyone else's."

I say my voice is still cracking with pressure and sorrow. Souji stares into my eyes and stands there for a while not saying anything.

Then he broke the silence, "I want to know, Shiro. I have a feeling that if I did know I can understand you better." Souji replied smiling, not smirking or anything else. He really means it. I sigh, "Back when I was first born by my true birthmother my uncle attacked our house seeking more power from the main family branch. We were the ones with no human blood, father was the first one born in the generation so the demon powers and positions were put in his hands. I was the youngest of all my siblings so I don't inherit the powers of my demon clan. We lived a peaceful life when I was only 2 months old. But that day when uncle attacked I was told that for my safety mother used a special spell to reborn me into a human and locking away my demon lineage. Unfortunately, somehow the spell couldn't hide all of my demon powers."

I stop and look at Souji and continue "Due to the times' high technology it sensed the demonic power leaking from me. They then took me away from my first human mother and enslaved me. They trained me alone and punished me if I didn't get things right the first time. They only taught me how to fight and protect myself. They never showed me love or happiness. They locked me up in a dark room every night and-" I started to tremble. "Then it happened." I paused, "I was fed up with how they treated me but I was also taught to keep my feelings and ideas to myself so I did, but doing so only made it worse for me. It was strong enough to awaken my _other_ demon side, empowering it, giving it more power of hate. It occurred that night. My emotions and mind were cracking down from the pressure and work I was forced to go through, she broke out taking full control my conscious. She killed and killed that night, but I couldn't stop her. I could only watch as she became weary and fell back to sleep again."

I blink away more tears, "But after that I met someone who I could be what you call 'friends' with. Her name is Ami, she and her parents looked after me. After a while I felt something inside my heart. They told me it was called love and happiness. I was full of great joy to finally know that feeling. But I didn't remember uncle. He- He killed, (sniff) he killed Ami and her parents he had his monster pet eat them in front of me. I tried to do everything I could do at the time but Iâ€¦" I slouched further down to the floor covering my face crying once more "I wasn't strong enough to save them. If I only could have kept them safe, my lights of joy, I could have been more of a better step sister and a better daughter for them. They were the very first people to show me love and happiness." I stopped talking my throat ached, my body felt tired, I was at that stage when Souji could be taken away from me. '_Just like Ami and the others.'_ I couldn't bear to think anymore of the memories of the wretched past of dying friends.

"Souji please understand, the more information the more the risk of losing you and the Shinsengumi. Please I don't want to see anyone suffer because of me. I want you and everyone else to live a life I wasn't allowed to live, take the chance now to forget and live peaceful with Chizuru and the others." I sobbed begging. Souji only looked at me with eyes of sorrow turmoil of horror and guilt. His body tensed as he leaned over to hold me, this time more sorrow, more desire to hold me, and the want of knowing more of my past.

I push Souji away. Souji sat there shock and confusion all over his face as he sits apart from me. "Now, you know," Shiro shakes her head. "You know too much already you and the Shinsengumi should just forget about me tonight!" I feel angry at myself for being so soft and telling Souji one of my past lives. I was a fool. _'How could I have revealed so much about me?! For sure he has to forget this moment.' _"Souji, who would you rather have? One special person with you _or your_ family?" I asked serious. Darting my eyes into his. "Answer, now. Otherwise I'll make up the choice for you. I'm not afraid to do it." I say with more intensity. Souji looks at me serious as well. Now his green eyes burning with anger and confusion lost not knowing what to answer with.

I close my eyes, slowly opening them to look emotionless. "Souji time is running out, you must make a choice. I cannot wait for morning or the day after, it has to be now Souji." I say with nearly no feeling. Souji glares at me in the most spiteful way.

"I chose my family." Souji says looking slightly grim and tired. I smile. "Then you chose them over me. It's a smart choice." I say sounding somewhat satisfied. Souji furrows his eyebrows, "'Choose them over you?'" Souji's eyes widened. "Shiro, I didn't mean just them." Souji takes hold of my arms again looking fierce and desperate into my eyes once more. "Shiro, you're also _my family_." He continued. After a moment of surprise Souji pulled me into his arms embracing me again, putting his left hand on the back of my head and his right hand around my waist.

"Shiro I can never let you suffer alone, not anymore. This time I'll protect you. I promise." My heart sank, '_Those were the words he once said to me before.' _Those were the words that my _other_ friends told me. They said that they would protect me and keep me safe. They kept on telling me not to worry, kept on telling me that everything was alright. _'But it wasn't.' _ It all ended the same way, dead. _'No, I can't let this happen again, not to Souji, not to the Shinsengumi, not to Chizuru. Please no, curse of oblivion please spare them. Please let my friends just this one time be free of the horrible death. I'm begging you curse please leave them be.' _I pleaded in my heart.

"Shiro what's wrong?" Souji gently pulls away my stiff body looking at me with eyes glazed with worry. The tears start falling down again one by one into a river flowing down an empty pathway. Smoothing gliding over my skin and dropping down to the wooden floor. "Souji, you're just saying the same things they did. It won't change your fate unless you leave me behind and move on." I manage to say in a calm tone regarding the clear tears.

Souji only continues to look at me, his face covered with countless emotions running through his eyes. Then there were sudden loud footsteps in the distance becoming louder each second. _'Oh no. Has everyone else been told?' _"Looks like we've been interrupted." I annoyingly remark. "Shiro!" Hijikata shouted as he opened the door. Seeing the two figures across from each other he sighed. "Honestly you two seem to be the ones who always sneak away." Hijikata said rubbing his temples frustrated. "Shiro we heard about you. I mean you're past. Ta-Takumi told us." Heisuke stuttered. Seeing me glare at my most isn't the prettiest sight.

"Wow, Shiro's glare may even beat Hijikata-san's." Shinpachi whispered to Harada. I snapped my head in his direction. _'Say that again and my glare may not only scare you next time!_' I use my telepathic powers on him, seeing him freeze as if he was sneaking away. Satisfied I cast my look back at Hijikata, "If you guys don't mind I need some sleep. I'll explain tomorrow." I say pointing at my door. Everyone connected gazes, Hijikata seriously nodded and everyone walked out.

Things are really getting harder to keep secret. _'Maybe I should just erase their memories. It will make it easier for them.'_ I thought to myself, as I got into my futon and fell deeply asleep.

(Souji's POV) _'I haven't seen her that worried for a while now. What made her so forceful to make us forget? I remember her saying something about curses. But what do the curses exactly do? She mentioned in her past that her friends died, and what would have made them die? Who wanted them dead? What use would it be to kill her-WAIT!?' Now I understand.'_ I thought. _'Shiro must have been threatened about her friends.'_ I finally arrive at my door. Laying down on my futon I think more and more about Hashiro. _'But why do I call her by her full name? Hmm, Hashiro, Hashiro. I feel like this name reminds me of something. Darn it I can't remember!_' _I scramble around on my futon making it messy with wrinkles.

Then I settle down. I can't help but feel like I need to go back to Shiro's room. I feel something tugging me far away. After half an hour I get up again and decide to go back to Hashiro's room. After 2 minutes or so I arrived at Shiro's door I call for her. "Hey Shiro are you still awake?" No answer. I call for her again, "Oi, Hashiro you still there?" No answer. "No way!" I slam open the door sending a loud echoing into the empty room. Only to see a note with a candle lit on her desk saying:

_I'm sorry Souji, I figure that you would be the first one _

_to find out that I'm gone. I have to leave you and the Shinsengumi now, _

it's for all of your own safety. I truly wish that I could spend

_more time with you Shinsengumi and Takumi. But now is the time when we _

go our own paths. I wish you, the Shinsengumi, and Takumi well.

It was nice to meet you Okita Souji.

I start crumbling the piece of paper in my hands. Anger and sadness seethed into my heart, crushing it with the feeling of being lonely. _'Why didn't I figure it out sooner?! Why didn't I stay with her, just to make sure that she wouldn't leave? I am such a __**fool**__ for not realizing this.'_ I run out of the room until I reach the entrance gate. I stand there, and then lean over against the side of the gate. I grit my teeth hard. Punching the gate door, I continue to stand there looking into the shadowy houses on the streets. _'Shiro, what made you run away? And exactly,' _I look down to my feet still

gritting my teeth, keeping my fist curled against the wood. '_how long have you been running?' _ "So she left didn't she?" A familiar young man walked over to Souji. "Takumi did you know that Shiro would leave?"

Souji glared into Takumi's dark purple-blue eyes with contempt. Takumi closed his eyes reopening them slowly. "I couldn't be sure if she really would leave. We're her most precious treasures after all. But this isn't the first time she left." Takumi paused as if letting Souji have his chance to interrupt. Immediately Souji's eyes widen in remembrance. "You said that you haven't seen Hashiro for more than 6 years am I mistaken?" Souji angrily asked. Takumi slightly smiled at Souji's smart memory. "No, you're right. When I met Shiro she was also cagey about things back then as well. Then after a year from when we first met, she just left and disappeared. I was worried but something told me that she was safe so I tried not to think about it too hard. Then after 6 and a half years I heard from father that Shiro came back." Takumi paused again, like letting the memory remain in his mind as long as possible. "But I didn't get to see her yet because of practice. I also heard that Shiro joined the Shinsengumi. I will admit I wasn't as happy when I heard that piece of information, but I was still happy to see Shiro in a long time."

Takumi slowly turned his head toward Souji, only his back was revealed from his retreating figure into the dark shadows, cast by the round shining white moon high in the dark blue and black sky. "Where are you going?" Souji stopped in his tracks.

'_I didn't even realize I was walking.' _I said to myself. Then I look back at Takumi who is about a house away. I turn back to the still shadows, "I'm going to go get Shiro-" I take one last look at Takumi, "after all she belongs with us." We both smile at each other as I continue to walk in the dark black pathway, leading to the river with the main bridge.

(Shiro's POV) After running away from headquarters I decided to relax before moving on. '_What use of staying if I can't keep them safe?'_ I ask myself, a crystal tear ran down my left cheek. I was sitting by the main bridge alongside the quiet streaming river. It always helped me stay calm when I'm by rivers. I reach out my right arm, dipping my fingers and letting them stand against the soft flowing river of the night. I never get a chance to protect the ones I love, someone or something always blocked my way, which made me worry more when creating bonds. If it were I who could have enough power to defeat the monster, yet was kept away when my friends needed me the most, what would do any good if I kept on countlessly having friendships? I can't keep watching them die such a terrible death.

I stay still by the river, a lullaby came into my head. I raise my head and sing softly "Coursing river, where are you going? To see the rest of the world. But why must you leave me behind, in this dark overwhelming place? Why don't you come with me? Because I have no strength to go. Then let me help you rise up to your feet." This lullaby was sung to me when I first met Ami. She found me by a river under a tree. She sang the song to me because she said that it seemed I was the one representing the person who didn't have the strength to move with the river. This is mostly true, I'm afraid to hurt anymore people so my only solution was to keep myself away from feelings and friendship, even love. What else could I do? I didn't know how to

completely control my powers nor did I know how many I had. I was just placed with the seal that kept me with that devastating curse. I was very young back then, it all happened before I met Takumi.

Snap! I turn instantly to the source of the sound. "Who's there!?" I sternly ask. A man with brown-reddish hair and dark green eyes appeared behind me. Tears once more start to well up heavily in my eyes. I said one word, one name, "Souji."

"Do you really think you can hide from me? C'mon Shiro let's go back." Souji said standing there in front of Shiro, holding out his left hand, smiling so kindly. Shock my eyes slightly widen, as I froze in position just about to reach for his hand when I pull it back within a blink of an eye. Souji stood still in his place puzzled. "Shiro what's wrong? Wasn't it you who said that you had a great time with us? If that's so then just come back, Takumi's probably waiting for us." Souji said, his face softening. I turn my head back toward the river away from Souji. It didn't feel right to be with him. Actually it felt terrible.

"Souji, you may not understand but I can't live as peaceful as the rest of you guys. I wasn't born to do that, my purpose in the world is to simply keep balance with good and evil. I'm not supposed toâ€¦." I trail off. "Supposed to what?" Souji arrogantly asked, obviously he's just trying to comfort me in his own way, making me talk out my feelings. "Humph, never mind." I numbly say slowly the tears disappear. Souji's smile curves into a playful smirk. "Aww, Hashiro that's mean I really wanted to know more about you." He half teased. I scowl at him. "If you're just here to tease me go away. I'm not in the mood for any of your jokes right now." I hissed, narrowing my eyes. Souji's features change again, this time serious and concerned. "Shiro you've been acting more distant each passing day. All of us are worried about you, but you won't even bother to tell us anything!?" Souji said sounding menacing.

"I've already told you more than you need to know. So just be satisfied and go back to Shinsengumi headquarters." I bluntly say still gazing at the rivers' smooth looking appearance against the stones, brushing over with rippled affects. Souji walks closer behind me, each step sounding with the gravel in the dirt. He stops, nearly only a foot from me. My back tingles from his presence. "Shinsengumi's headquarters? You already make it sound as if you're not one of us." Souji hissed back. I sit still, "That's because I'm _not_ one of you. I'm different, a stranger, an outcast." My voice feels shallow and quiet. I sink down lower into the earth gently wrapping my arms around my knees. Suddenly I feel a tight grasp on my right arm. Souji roughly pulls me up, hard enough I felt like I just jumped into the air. He pulls me into his warm embrace. "Shiro, we _never_ thought of you as those things you suggested. You're like a 5 year old sister to me when you keep running away. I always had the feeling to watch your every move, always trying to prevent you from getting hurt." Souji's voice trembles when he said the last few words.

I stiffly stood still, "I'm sorry Souji. I know I've caused nothing but pain, that's why I wanted you and everyone else to forget. To forget the pain when I came along. You guys are only watching over me because of Kosu." I sadly said, forcing tears back from falling. "Heh, pain? I would be bedridden by now if it weren't for you." Souji

briefly said before pushing us apart to look into my dark brown eyes. "I don't care for you Shinsengumi anymore, now why can't you just leave me alone and find someone else to worry about." I say harshly. Souji only smiled when he heard this, "Then why did you cure my tuberculosis?"

I froze slightly pushing away. "I just didn't want you to suffer from that illness is all." I say looking away from his focused gaze. "Oh really, perhaps you're in love with me back then were you?" I snap my head to look him in the eye. "That's absolutely not true. It's something else that's personal." I say looking away again in sorrow. Tears fell down slowly, so many times, I've never cried this much before. To my luck Souji's fierce look becomes calm and regretful. "I'm sorry Shiro I didn't know what I was talking about." Souji look becomes sadder, but still with question. 'He reminded me of another friend who was dying of tuberculosis. But unfortunately Kosu and uncle found out our friendship, he was killed on the spot. His body was fatally slashed, his chest the most. Blood was leaking everywhere it didn't look like a human body anymore. When I found out I was desolate and angry. Always seeing precious friends die, and I couldn't do a thing to change that.''

"Hashiro, I know it's none of my business to ask, but what else happened to you?" Souji asked darting his eyes to the river then back at me. I finally push away from his arms walking back closer to the river. "Why can't you just leave me alone? All you've ever done was kepttelling me that you'd protect me. But now I don't see any of that in this situation!" I half screamed. I knew that I had fallen for Souji, and I know he has fallen for me. I just can't stop remembering other friends who have had their heart broken.

Selia, she also had fallen in love with a man, but as same as many love stories this man didn't love Selia the way she did. Silia tried her best to stay out of his sight since he was in love with someone else, but she constantly followed him to places. And the more she followed him the more she envied the woman he loved. He'd kiss her on the cheek and embrace her, she'd laugh with him and he'd laugh with her. They seemed to be a perfect match. Selia couldn't help a feeling growing within her. It wasn't exactly jealousy, it was pain, sorrow, and love. One day, Selia, she told me about her love for that man, she told me farewell then. I thought that she was just traveling to another town to cool herself down and return. But that was not the case, she was captured by uncle. Used as bait to get to me and Selia's love. Because even though he didn't fall in love with Selia he cared for her as a good friend.

Selia was put under a spell to stay asleep at the moment, once I managed to defeat uncle he disappeared and the spell on Selia broke. She awakened in his arms, although, things happened in the opposite way it was supposed to. Selia still hurt that the man cradling her in his arms was still not in love with her she killed him out of madness. After realizing her crime and craziness she killed herself as punishment to her selfishness. But the thing is, I don't think she was selfish. Selia was watching from a distance so that she didn't interfere with her love's life. By choosing his happiness over her own, she ended up sealing her feelings slowly and ended up in torment of seeing them happy together. No matter how much she tried to stop from following him, she was stuck with a very strong desire to look for him, and every time she found him with his love.

For me this is different, but the feelings Selia felt is the same with me. I sealed away my own feelings and tried to put on a brave face, only destroying myself in the end. I couldn't love because I didn't have the time to worry about such things as those, until now.

Souji and the Shinsengumi were the people who have trusted me for being a demon along with Chizuru. They accepted me as who I am, for so many years people haven't trusted me nor shown me respect. That's why I thought that I could spend time getting to know them. It was always lonely for me to be alone. Having such a desolate future is it not normal for even beings such as I to yearn for comfort and happiness? Year after year, life after life I live on with a job to destroy those evil with powers too immense for anyone else to kill. I was born with one purpose and one purpose alone: to keep balance of good and evil. And that is all. Anything else that would stop or distract me of my job with be hunted down and killed.

The night has seemed to last longer with the cool breeze brushing past us. Souji now looked full of content. Then he started laughing quietly to himself. "What's wrong? Are you sick?!" I immediately ask with alarm.

"Hah, no I'm definitely not sick. C'mon Shiro let's just go back home." Souji suggested. "I'm not convinced Souji." I say bluntly. "You'll have to say way more than that to make someone as important as me to come with you." I say waving my finger and arm. "You're just too stubborn." I punch Souji's arm. "I can say the same to you mister!" I half scold.

Souji remained quiet for a while before saying "You know I think I'm scheduled to go on patrol tomorrow." I tense up. "But you're not supposed to be patrolling that soon. Remember you're still sick!" I harshly half scold. His teasing grin spreads across his face. "I knew it you were worried." "I was not! You're just not supposed to patrol yet!" I retorted. Souji shrugs, "I'm not that sick, I'm fine enough to go patrolling." I glare "Yeah in your head!" I pause for a moment "You can patrol your room." I teased back. Souji's look becomes grim. "Yeah you think I haven't done that already?" My eyes widen. "You're serious? I was just kidding."

Souji smiles "Yeah I knew you were just kidding. But you really should just forget about keeping world balance for a while. If all it gets is help it won't be able to sustain itself when you're gone." I keep my look serious, but calm enough for casual talk. "Don't forget there's a special spell to bind me with the world, it would take more than just killing me to get rid of me." I say, looking back at the river. It shines along with the stones in the moonlight. But the night was becoming slightly brighter. Dawn was going to come soon. I walk away slowly. "Wait, where are you going?" Souji calls. I'm already half way into the river. "I'm going to be gone for a while. Please tell everyone else that for me." I say not looking back. Continuing walking I nearly disappear in the dark. Until I feel a hand grab my right arm. I slightly turn my head back only to see a part of his arm. "What?" I feel Souji's eyes narrowing behind me. "You know there no place you can go. Why do you keep running? Why don't you face off that stupid curse you keep talking about?" Souji sternly asks. I grit my teeth, "Souji I have already. The results were not worth it." I say behind clenched teeth. "Bloodshed from an enemy is different from a comrade. Even I don't have enough power to

bring the dead back to life yet." I roughly shake off his hand and look at him, one eye crying pure tears, and the other blood. "Listen Souji I do not run away unless I absolutely have to. I've been against the curse, and I've fought against the person who keeps the curse in check. You don't know what bloodshed I've seen." I sob.

"Every miracle that happens always come with a price, the so called miracle I've been blessed with is a life as long as the earth itself. But its price is seeing the death of my all of my most precious friends. Their screams of pain, their world burning, their blood spreading, I can't stand it!" I yell again, getting exhausted. I fall to my knees, splashing into the river. But Souji remains standing. "Couldn't you kill the one who cursed you? You don't have to do everything alone." I finally couldn't hold back my feelings and frustration. "Souji I've tried but I can't. He kills everyone I hold dear. He makes it impossible for friendship. You don't understand he finds a way to kill everyone! No matter how strong you are. I wasn't born like you! I don't have my own decisions, I don't have freedom like you do!" Due to my outburst Souji face was like a tidal wave of emotions. Unsure of what to say next Souji continues to stand still, blocking the moonlight beam from reaching my face.

"You don't know how lonely it is already. Just go back and let me go." I slowly bring myself back to my feet. "Just forget me. And live on with the others." My feet start to disappear. Souji starts running toward me. "Don't run away Shiro!" Souji shouts, but quietly echoes away into nothing. The disappearing line comes up to my knees. Souji finally reaches me he takes hold of me again. "Stop it you don't need to run this time! You need to keep on trying to win!" Souji continues to shout.

My eyes with hardly any emotions now, become dimmer with nothingness, my body stiff and letting the spell cast my body into a different dimension. Souji at this point embraces me and holds me tightly. "Shiro you can't go now. The world would be different without you around." Then, his voice fades away completely. I see him speaking but no voice came through. The spell comes to half of my body before a sinister aura seemed to have approached.

A figure appeared behind Souji, raising its arms with a sharp object. I instantly stop the spell. "N000!" Before contact with the weapon I managed to use force and push Souji left just in time. But unfortunately the weapon cuts off my right arm. The blood leaks out from my shoulder and falls to the green grass, staining it. "Dang it. Uncle I thought you were dead." I stated. My legs coming back into form. He cackled. "That's because it was my clone. My new creation. It was perfect even you, the last born princess of the main family of demons and angels couldn't sense it's falseness." I narrowed my eyes in anger and disbelieve. '_How could I not be able to tell at the moment? He was right I didn't sense it as a clone. I was fooled!'

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Now uncle raised his weapon again ready to strike. "Not so fast!" I yelled. I make various hand signals and slam my left hand into the earth. Then the ground beneath uncle started to rumble then shake violently. A crack was made in the process, the demon gatekeeper of the underworld rose from the giant crack in front of uncle. It's form is like armor, red and covered with flames. Uncle stared at the demon, amazed that I was able to summon such a powerful being while

seriously wounded. I stagger a bit as I glared at uncle. "Don't underestimate me! I'm different now than I was back then." I declare. Souji on the other hand looked worried, his eyes slightly wide. But he calmly walk to my side, "Shiro, don't overdo things here. You lost your right arm are you okay?" Souji asks.

Not making eye contact with Souji I simply nod to his question. "Souji I need you to stay away for now until that man is gone. Understood?" Souji sighs and answers "Understood. But end this quick or I'll join you. You got that?" I smile and glance at him. "Of course."

4. Chapter 4

I start running towards uncle and jump into the air. Using my abilities I fly forward and also summon my own demon weapon. Uncle blocks it, but I swing my weapon again pushing him towards the underworld gatekeeper. Because he's the gatekeeper of the underworld even if a powerful being such as me summon him from earth his time is limited depending how much power I used to summon him.

"You are indeed more powerful. But every power has its limits. Soon your energy will run out as well." He announced not realizing the demon gatekeeper behind him coming closer. Within a flash the gatekeeper took hold of uncle in his hand, its giant-like form of armor, saying "For the princess of evil and good I shall drag this man to the underworld as you wished." He tugs uncle down halfway into the gate, and then uncle casts a spell also making his body disappear. But only half of his body disappeared with the spell. Meaning that he might still live for a while longer. The giant crack closes and the gatekeeper disappears along with it.

Souji runs up to me. I slowly fall to my knees clutching my right shoulder where it's still bleeding. "Shiro you've lost too much blood. Hereâ€¦" Souji pulls out a piece on with cloth and puts it on my shoulder. I touch his hand and pull it away, then putting my left hand on top of the cloth as it glows. Next I summon a roll of bandages and start wrapping it around my shoulder, going down. Souji's eyes widen more as the wrapped bandages take form of my right arm. "As long as I leave the bandages alone it will become my temporary right arm until it regenerates back. The glow was another spell I used to stop the bleeding and for it to invisibly make a right arm so I can wrap the bandages." I explain.

Souji's eyes go back to normal size and nods, helping me get up. Souji carefully walks me over to the edge of the river and settle down on the ground. He still looked worried. I smile a little "Don't worry. The spell on my life has to break first before I die. And it ain't that easy to break." I say, trying to comfort him from the thought of me dying. His face softens into a smile as well. "If I see you pushing yourself to the limit like that again I'll kill you."

"Lucky it was only my right arm. It could have been way worse." I add. Souji sighs. "You don't have to say something depressing you know. Aside from that what are you going to do now? If you won't go back to headquarters I'll drag you there myself." Souji informed keeping his gaze on me. I look down at the grass. "Do you really think I should go back? You all could die within the next minute if I

do." I nearly muttered. Souji smirked and patted my head. "Huh?" Souji held out his hand, "Shall we go back? Its dawn someone has to help cook breakfast." I smile wider, "Okay." _'I should try to spend more time with them at least before I go.' _

Souji and I head back to headquarters but by the time we get there everyone's waiting for us at the gate. "Yo, what took you guys so long to ge-" Shinpachi stopped halfway. Everyone stared at my completely bandaged right arm. "Shiro what happened to you?" Chizuru yelped, covering her mouth in horror. I still smile warmly "Don't worry I'm alive and that's what counts right Kondou-san?" Everyone including Saito gaped at my words. Sure I say some of their names in surnames instead of first names but I've never used honorifics in anyone's names before. "Hey is Shiro okay? Do you think Souji did anything to her?" Heisuke whispered to Harada. Then I dramatically fake pout. "What now that I finally use honorifics in someone's name you guys actually don't like it?" I ask in fake pity.

Heisuke raised his hands as if in defeat "No no it's nothing like that it's just ..uhâ€|well you haven't exactly been known to use honorifics." Heisuke explained. I look at Takumi who's behind everyone. I narrow my eyes in playful suspicion. "And what about you Takumi? You seem to be pretty happy I'm different." I slurred. Takumi merely smiled and walked away. Soon everyone is in the dining room eating breakfast peacefully. But this makes me sad. _'What if this is the last breakfast we'll ever have together? Uncle will soon come again to try to slaughter you all. But can I protect them? Do I have enough power to finally defeat him? After all he's done, I have to defeat him. For their sake.' _Though I kept telling myself I could protect the Shinsengumi and Chizuru, the questions haunted me even till night. I lay in bed thinking of all the things we did together during the day, trying to cherish and remember all the good memories before the time comes.

Before the time comes for the killing and bloodshed. _'NO! Please don't let that happen, not to them.' _I fuss and turn side to side in my futon. I turn to one side where the shoji door gleams from the moonlight. Pale blue, casting shadows of the door. Not being able to sleep I walk outside and climb on the roof. I sit there for a while and look at the stars and moon. Then I jump over to a large tree branch and sit there resting against the tree.

The breeze continues to blow softly against my black-brown hair. Zoning off into space I think about Ami's wish. _"I want you to try not to kill unnecessary, I really want to bless you to be able to live a peaceful life in the future."_ When I was at that life time I always killed people who got in my way without sympathy. When Ami found out of my killing she helped me stop the unnecessary bloodshed of innocent people. I don't know why I killed people now that I think about it. I wasn't me when I murder. I don't know how it doesn't feel like me when I kill, it's just, when I think about slaughtering something inside me seems to explode with happiness of death. The feeling though was as if it was from a different being.

I shake my head from thought. "I can protect them and I will protect them." I say out loud, but quiet enough that no one around would hear. Just then I noticed someone outside by the small pond to my left. It was surprisingly Souji. He was standing in front of the pond looking at his reflection. I decided to sneak down the tree and hide behind a pole. I peeked over and saw Souji sitting down, he was

looking at the sky. I silently walked over and waited behind him. He leaned farther back to see me. "You want something?" I shake my head. Souji smiles and goes back to looking at the stars, but then he frowns. I sit next to him. "What's wrong?" I ask. Souji still averts his eyes from me. "There's not much I can do for the Shinsengumi. The only thing I can do is kill and that's what I'm only good at." He says out of the blue. Surprised and slightly taken back for him I retort back "What do you mean?! There are obviously many things you can do than just killing for the Shinsengumi!" A little shocked by my outburst Souji looks at me, his warm smile and sudden calm eyes.

"What?" He laughs quietly placing his right hand on his forehead. "What?!" I ask more demand, he stops laughing and sighs "The fact that you can be so reassuring is strange to the point it's funny. Exactly what makes you think I can do anything else for the Shinsengumi?" Souji inquires. I too, look at the sky again lost in thought. Another smile spread across my face. "Because, your willingness to protect the Shinsengumi and your captain is what makes you a loyal warrior which for many others it's hard to do. The fact that you love to stay with the Shinsengumi just proves that you could have encouraged other warriors to be like you a strong loyal fighter who believes nothing more than to protect his leader. I think that you just won't give yourself credit for it." I say assuring. Meanwhile Souji stares with surprise and happiness both intertwining with each other.

His shocked frown curls into a gentle smile. "You really are good with words you know that?" "Hey, that's what friends are for." I trail off. "Something the matter, you seem to be sad all of a sudden." Souji asks. Tears threaten to well up in my eyes again but I will myself not to cry. "Souji, you remember the things I've told you about me right?" I ask back. Souji's smile quickly withers back to a frown. "All of those murders he did your friends? Yeah, to tell you the truth I never thought an uncle would kill his niece's best friends. And if I were in your place I would feel the same way, butâ€¦" I look in his eyes they're full of worry, curiosity, pain, and hate.

If you think about it that's just how I feel. Although I'm still afraid to show any more emotion I already have. "you really don't have to keep hiding. There has to be a change for you to be free. Please let the Shinsengumi and I help you in this task." Souji finished his sentence. I stare blankly at him for what seemed like hours until I finally blinked and look away. The sun starting rising, time is passing by. "Ah, looks like we've been awake for a while huh?" Souji looks at the rising sun then back at me.

"You need to rest, your arm, is it hurting at all?" We both stare at my bandages which are hollow on the inside. "No." I lie, the agony of losing my right arm for what could be weeks to months and the possibility of the Shinsengumi's deaths still burn inside me, _'Can I really save them this time? If I can what will be the cost of saving their lives?_' Instead of thinking of more questions about the topic I push it aside and get up. I put on a fake smile "Yeah, let's go back." I say, but Souji on the other hand still looked worried and unsatisfied with something. I still don't dare read into his thoughts.

Yet he smiles back, "I agree." We both mask our fears of the future.

And then I sense someone's death within 2 days. I also see a flag torn and tampered, in kanji it read 'Shinsengumi'.

Souji and I walked back into our own rooms. But the death that I sensed of the Shinsengumi bothers me. My arm won't generate fast enough to be useful in battle, and I couldn't sense on how they were killed, I just sensed death. My temporary right arm of bandages will wear out. If it happened on the day that the Shinsengumi would be attacked I would be useless to help them. Even Chizuru is no match for uncle, no, that _man_. He killed mother, goddess of the heavens and somehow he also killed father lord of the underworld and sealed him away somewhere.

Even though I've been reborn as a human a few times already, I still hold complete lineage to my first birth parents, the demons of good and evil, was what I called them sometimes. I lay in my futon once again and again I couldn't sleep.

'_What am I going to do in just 2 days? I can't predict what's exactly going to happen until then. And the Shinsengumi, how will I explain this to them? Tell them "Hey you guys are going to die 4 days, so I have to take my leave now."? No way, they'd never let me leave including the fact that they would die from someone or something within 2 days, well, now probably 1 day. _I turn away from the door and look at the slightly brightening walls. _'It's a new day now. Just 1 more day. I want to enjoy it 'til the end. But I don't want them to die, not because of me. Sooo WHAT AM I GOING TO DO!? I can't be certain that they would be 100% fine after just 1 day. I have to plan something should I ask Takumi? He does know who I am he even told Souji what I was thinking of doing so maybe he can help me._

_NO! I can't drag him into this. AHHHHG!' _I grab the sides of my head and turn back and forth in my futon. Then I stop, looking at the ceiling. _'I bet Souji's awake too.'_ I thought. So much has happened already I don't know how to end this relationship with the Shinsengumi and Chizuru.

Then I smelled some food being cooked for breakfast. But I stay in my futon even when Chizuru came to check on me since I didn't arrive in the dining room with everyone for breakfast. "Shiro are you really okay, even Soujis' with everyone else eating?" Chizuru asked concerned. My back was facing her. I turn back a bit "I'm fine, just tired I couldn't really sleep last night." I answer then turn back facing away from her. I heard Chizuru sigh quietly before closing the door. I couldn't think of what to do with everyone. Should I kill them before someone else did? Or should I just leave them alone? But I constantly thought to myself, _'I should kill them with my own hands. It's better than to let that man do it himself.'_ And yet I also keep telling myself I shouldn't, that I should just help them survive.

Just then I heard Heisuke yelling "Shiro what are you doing?!" As fast as lightning I get up and run to where Heisuke was. And then I sensed something red, blood. When I got to the scene Chizuru was sprawled on the floor, wide eyes bleeding everywhere around her, but she doesn't have her left arm or right foot. The cuts on her were deep and still oozing with blood. While Heisuke stood behind Chizuru looking dazed as well. Then his gaze turns up to me, he's glaring at me for some reason. "Shiro why did you kill Chizuru?! What did she

ever do to you?!" His hands balled into tight fists. Everyone came running out of the dining room to see the scene of Chizuru's death. Heisuke pointed at me accusingly, "Shiro, shiro it was you who killed Chizuru, but why?!" He continued to yell letting his hand go back into the form of a fist. I was shocked, before all of this I was in my room, Chizuru is dead here for some reason, and Heisuke is accusing me of killing her. "I didn't kill her Heisuke I swear I would never hurt Chizuru." I nearly fell to tears. This was one of the signs that man would use to tell me to leave my friends. 'Then this all would be over.' I told myself.

But Heisuke didn't stop there, "LIAR! I saw you cutting off her left arm and right foot! I saw you!" Then I think back to when I defeated uncle again. He told me the one where I thought I killed him was merely a clone. It was nearly perfect! I didn't sense it as a clone. But how could he make a clone of me? He would need my blood. Then the memory back to when I killed Keina, he did make cuts ~~m=on~~ on my body before I killed. My eyes widen more. Maybe he somehow teleported or transfer it to uncle. Harada and Shinpachi were holding Heisuke back from trying to beat me. Instead of fighting back or telling them it wasn't me I fell to my knees and hung my head to hide the fact that I was crying. At the corner of my eye I see Souji standing there in disbelief, but in a good way. I look up to see Souji nodding, I give him a confused look. Then he smiled "Shiro it wasn't your fault. I already have an idea of who killed Chizuru." I'm still kneeling, and then I cry even harder. To think that someone would believe that I wasn't a murder of Chizuru was miraculous.

But everyone else only stared at him, then they looked at Heisuke. "Are you sure it was Shiro who killed Chizuru?" Harada asked eyeing me. Heisuke seemed ot have calmed down, "I don't know it looked exactly like her." Souji's face darkens, "It was a clone." He muttered full of hate. Then I too, felt hate spreading in my heart as well. That man killed my friends in my past lives, and now Chizuru who reminded me of Ami, there's no way I will let him get away with this. "Souji ," I say in a shaky voice, still crying. "I will avenge Chizuru's death. He will regret the day he made his creation!" I say in a stronger voice. Souji grinned in seeing my strong will. Everyone else just looked confused and blankly at the two of us. For the first time I will ask for help in defeating uncle, for the first time I will trust that we can destroy that man. I slowly stand up "Souji will you please help me destroy that man?" I ask looking solemnly into his eyes the tears stopped have flowing.

"But of course." He answers back. I smile, for once I will fight with a good friend at my side and I will be free after this. I smile wider at the thought, and I will find a way to bring Chizuru back to life. "Hey we want to help too!" exclaimed Heisuke. I look at him, he gulped and looked away guilty "and sorry for accusing you." He murmurs. "That's okay." I say. I change my face to look serious. "But now, he has also killed Chizuru.." I sobbed. "Also?" asked Harada. I half glared half smiled in a weird way. "This isn't the first or even the 10th time that man has killed my best friends." I say half sobbing now.

I look at the sun which is half way up into the clear blue sky. "But now I will make him pay." I growled. That was when Souji asked "Then when are going to go get him?" I glanced at him, and smile confident. "Nighttime is his weakest time to battle." I start. "Until then I will have to plan things from here on. Whatever you do never pursue

him on your own. He's still more powerful than all of you." I announce. Then I look at Hijikata who seems to be the angriest of Chizuru's death. _'Don't worry I will find a way to bring Chizuru back._ I close my eyes. _I promise._ _With that I left for my room. Sitting in the corner where my desk was and think of strategies.

Hours passed but it wasn't nighttime yet. The atmosphere in my room tensed, as the Shinsengumi captains walked into my room closing the door behind them. "Thought of anything?" Souji asked calmly. Knowing that I'm still under pressure, I look at them. They all seemed to be worried about me now. Then Heisuke spoke up "Souji told us what happened to you in one of your past lives. We understand what you went through and wish to help you as well." I grimace. "You can't understand what I've been through without experience." I say quietly tired of thinking hard. "But Chizuru was just killed that counts as an understanding!" Heisuke retorts opposing. "Just 1 or 2 faithful friends dying don't mean you understand my pain. Not only were my friends killed but I was not able to make my own choices in life, nor was I allowed to 'relax' or ask for help. I hardly know my own family, and one of the 'family' was the one who killed my best friends. I never got to experience happiness for a long time. The longest was a week before their deaths. My hopes were buried deep and far away. I tried to escape it by moving onto a different life. But the same happens!" I talk back raising my voice slightly.

"Death, blood, hate, pressure, expectations! Those feelings of sorrow were forced away. I did my best to impress those who kept me captive. I thought that if I could please those scientists and government police then they would leave me alone. But no. They didn't respect that _I _a _demon_ have feelings! They kept using me as a tool; they didn't tolerate me failing even once. They thought that a demon was supposed to be perfect at everything. They thought that all they needed to do was kill people I hold dear and then I would be perfect." At this point tears absently fell down my cheeks. Realizing I was crying I quickly wipe away the salt tears. "But when they realized that I started failing their expectations.. theyâ€| they.." I sniffed each time pausing to continue, the captains now look full of guilt. But Heisuke still presses on foolishly "They w-what?" He quivered. I glared "They sealed away my feelings!" I yell, my powers as a demon would sometimes take action to my feelings, the room started to shake.

"They didn't care about me, they used to the very end! I was only lucky because a friend at the time helped restore my feelings, but he was killed too!" I cried out of control only making the room shake more violently. Everyone looked nervous but didn't say anything. "Don't you understand!? I was confined, used like a tool, blamed! The murdersâ€|.those people blamed it on me!" I cried. Emotions of pain turmoil inside me as I started to loose myself. An inner being rose to the surface taking control. The room immediately stopped shaking and went back to normal, but they soon realized Shiro wasn't. "Who are you?" Souji demanded.

'Shiro' smiled evilly, pure evil reeked of the being controlling Shiro. Her eyes changed from dark brown to light blue, shining like the moon. "I'm a being that my lady Shiro created out of grieve." She answered casually. "But I thought Shiro was taught to keep her feelings to herself?" Shinpachi asked dubiously. She held out her right bandaged arm and a weapon appeared. It was like a spear but had

blades at both ends and the blades themselves were wide and flat, sharp at both ends. "You're right she was taught that. But you see her feelings of resentment of those people were sealed away within her heart, as time goes by the hatred grew and grew remarkably large." She let out a soft evil chuckle. "It grew to the point it had to become one and formed a being thus I am the creation of her secretly growing hatred."

All of their eyes widened as 'Shiro' raises her weapon in a position ready to swing at any moment. "You caused my lady to remember those horrible memories not to mention feelings she felt. Now you will all pay with your lives." Souji was the only one who became calm. He stood and walked in toward 'Shiro' and somehow managed to hit the weapon out of her hands. "The Shiro I know won't let you kill us." Souji stated. "I can tell that she is the type of person to care for her close friends no matter what they do or say to her, especially if it was only misjudgment for the moment." 'Shiro' walked backwards slowly, each step behind another. Souji took hold of her left wrist. Instantly she tried to pry away from his grasp but to no avail. Then 'Shiro' smirked, "You don't know anything about my power. She can't ever defeat me!" She boldly chided. Holding her head high, but when she was about to continue with her words she threw her head back screaming in agony and surprise. From hearing the sudden loud shrieking scream Souji lets go of 'Shiro's' wrist and steps back a few paces covering his ears like everyone else.

"NO! NOOO! Stop controllingâ€| ghâ€| my body you monster!" Shiro's voice kept on switching pitches due to the two spirits fighting. Shiro held the sides of her head and swayed back and forth falling to her knees and banging the side of her head on the wooden wall, denting it. "No! Stop, leave me alone!" Shiro commanded. _Bang, bang, bang! _ Shiro continuously banged her head against the wall as if doing so will force the spirit out against will. The Shinsengumi could only watch in confusion, worry, and eagerness for the violent banging to stop. Souji took 3 steps closer but Shiro screamed "Stay away Souji! You mustn't come close or elseâ€|egh..she'll kill you!" Shiro cried in pain.

In my mind though, I saw someone else than the other being who was trying to take over my body again. It was a woman, she's wearing an elaborate kimono patterned with wind-like swirls and autumn leaves. She was weakly smiling her eyes are medium amber, her hair completely black until the very end of the tips a light carmel brown touch is tied up in a high pony tail, leaving her bangs out of the bound. "Name yourself." I called out. Her smile became weaker, almost frowning. "You really don't know do you? Although it's not you to blame, but if you continue to hold all the earths' burden upon yourself you'll surely be crushed by it. I will admit as a mother I am surprised you're still holding onto your sanity."

I slightly narrow my eyes, thinking of the answer from the word 'mother'. "Are you my mother?" I quizzically ask, uncertain. She gave a little nod. But I don't soften my expression much. Her smile becomes a sad frown. "I'm sorry this is all my fault. I should have casted a stronger and more secure spell for you. Shiro you were only a newborn far back then."

Even though the woman who was my first and true birthmother has shown herself (even if it's spiritually) and admitted her mistake I still feel the burden only growing than lessen. "Couldn't you have used a

different spell to protect me? Can't you put me in one of my eldest siblings care? I thought our kind could last longer than most oni and human if we were stabbed in the eternal organs?" All the questions I asked were only a minimum of what I had in mind.

"Yes, it's true that our kind even half breeds could live a while longer even though their organs have been pierced or slashed to pieces. But your siblings were not around the time I was attacked. All women in our demon kind will lose nearly more than three fourths of our power when in child labor due to the power mainly focusing on the child, twin, or triplets, the power always strive for perfection that is why we also live for a long period of time." She answered. "I see." I mumbled. She continued "I was out of options; the spell I used was one that didn't use as much energy. But when I looked down from heaven and saw you suffering. It was made clear that I made a terrible mistake. And I am very sorry my dear child."

The place started to disappear along with my birth mother. "Your friends await you Shiro. Go to them." With that she completely had gone from sight. I was in my body once more. My head hurting like a hurricane just went by at its strongest.

Souji is by my side while everyone else is behind him. "Shiro are you okay? You changed for a bit. What happened?" I look at his bizarre concerned expression plastered on his face. "I'll explain later, right now I'm tired." Souji nodded everyone but we two remained in my room.

"You probably met her. The one made of my grief." I started. Souji slightly nodded to confirm. "She can also summon a weapon, and she thinks she can overthrow you." Souji informed solemnly. I sighed as I slowly laid down on my futon. Looking at Souji he seemed to be confused the most. "Why didn't you tell us about her? Wasn't she a threat?" I turn my head to look at the ceiling, the room stayed quiet for a while before I broke it. "She is somewhat a part of me. The feelings of hatred and grieve for my friends and myself are combined together, she is the feelings of bitter resentment I felt far back into my past lives. So it's not as easy to just kill her spiritually or send her away." Minutes of silence passed by again, "Besides she is the only one who can truly understand what I've been through, even if she does threaten to take over me, she's just doing what I would probably have done if I hadn't casted away those feelings." This time I couldn't cry, my eyes felt dry and water only a little making me blink continuously.

"So are you saying your feelings now and her are different?" I felt my heart sink. "In a way, yes. I've always been more of a cheery person because I sealed the rest of the feelings of hate away, very little was with me and I soon regretted sealing them away, but" I closed my eyes for a minute. "Even my hate grew too much for her to burden alone, the feelings I once sent away came back to me slowly." I explained. I see Souji tighten his fists. My eyes soften, sad feelings rounded up in my chest, feeling as if I was still carrying weight. "So you said back there that she probably commits actions of vengeance and hate in your place. She also said that she would kill us for making you remember things. I don't think she is anything like you." Souji shook his head. "She is a different being now, I can't imagine you killing your comrades for your own likeness." Souji disagreed. "Well actually it was my fault that my dear friends died." I added, vision becoming blurry. Souji puched the ground with his

strong fist, as if venting out his own feelings of sadness and anger. "It was not your fault." Souji wavery whispered through clenched jaws. I shake my head "No it is. You see I could have prevented their deaths by leaving them so that man would think I have no one to befriend. But I selfishly stayed with them, sending all of them to certain death.." I stopped, tears rolled down my cheeks again without realizing it. "I wasn't able to protect them even though I was next to them." I sobbed trying to hold back, but I continue to sob more. "They all died because I didn't choose to leave them be, I brought my curse upon them and I am the one to blame." I wiped away tears with the back of my hand.

Souji raised his fist from the ground using it to prop himself up, leaning back. We both look at the ceiling. "It was not your fault." Souji quietly repeated begrudgingly. I shut my eyes tight turning my back to him. "Don't LIE! It's obvious that it was my fault to end their lives in such a horrible way!" I shouted back. My body started trembling. I hugged myself, trying to reassure myself, but failed once again. Then I felt familiar arm wrap them around me. Souji rested his left cheek on my upper right bandaged arm which is slowly growing back. "You didn't deserve to be under that pressure, you only desired to be comforted with friends. It's normal for anyone who has been imprisoned, confined, and cruelly used to seek that kind of relationship." Souji reassured. I gradually calmed down. Souji still embraced me patient for me to stop crying. Then he let me go sitting up behind me. I think the same thing he does now that I'm finally calm. "Night has nearly come, I've thought of an idea. We all should leave soon." I sat up as well. Souji stood up and walked up to the door about to slide it open but he paused, "We'll be waiting for you, Hashiro." With that said he swiftly opened the door and closed it. Leaving me alone to smile, I look at the door, Souji's silhouette was still there about to walk away. "Souji," I called. "Hmm?" I smile wider "Thank you. Please tell everyone to wait by the entrance gate in 5 minutes."

Souji walks off to announce what I've told him. I quickly get out of my futon and get dressed. Wearing long black loose pants (modern western pants) a tank top-like black shirt and a pair of black boots knee length and gloves showing my fingers. I tie my hair up into a ponytail and leave my room.

Within 3 minutes I arrive and see Heisuke, Harada, Saito, and Souji waiting for me. "Everyone else is still getting ready." Harada informed. I nod. "Let's wait a little longer, besides it hasn't been 5 minutes yet." I said. We waited and about 2 minutes later Hijikata, Chizuru, and Shinpachi arrived then. "Let's go. It's time." With that said we left, everyone had to follow me since I was the only one who could sense the man's aura. "So what's the plan?" Heisuke asked along the way. I keep looking forward. "The triple-idiots will distract him first while, Souji, Hijikata, Chizuru, Kondou, and Saito wait to attack from behind." I told. Heisuke walked on with a confused face. He put his index finger across his chin, looking down at the dirt road. "Wait, who are the triple-idiots? And why aren't Sano-san, Shinpachi-san, and I mentioned?" Heisuke still walked on but abruptly stopped 3 yards after seeing Souji smirk. "Wait! Shinpachi-san, Sano-san, and I are the triple-idiots?!"

"Bingo, took you long enough." Souji teased. Shinpachi, Harada, and Heisuke all start yelling at me on why I called them the triple-idiots. I sighed heavily, rubbing my temples frustratingly.

_ 'He's expecting me. What do I do if he knows my plan? What if he just kills the Shinsengumi? I probably won't have enough energy to bring them back to life now that I know how. So what should I really have them do?'_ I continuously asked myself questions trying hard to ignore the trio's loud complaints. Shinpachi, Harada, and Heisuke are still complaining, it was to the point where Shiro couldn't stand it anymore. Besides they have been complaining for nearly 10 minutes even the rest of the Shinsengumi captains looked annoyed. Shiro stopped walking; a scary-annoyed aura surrounded her. But due to the 'idiots' complaining they didn't really notice it. "SHUT UP!" I yelled at the top of my lungs.

The 3 stood there stunned afraid to say anything more. I sighed heavily "If you guys really couldn't tell I was just joking then you guys really are idiots." I lashed out. I went back to walking, but this time the 3 hid behind everyone avoiding sight of me. This made Souji frown in a confused way "Eh? Aren't you 3 supposed to be men? Such wimps." Souji slowly shook his head while smirking widely. We all walked miles and hours to a platform below a giant mountain. Hijikata asked Chizuru if she needed any help walking further but Chizuru said no to each time he asked. As for everyone they looked a little tired. I sighed. Raising my left hand in a waving like motion, everyone looked at me as if I was playing with an imaginary friend. Instantly their eyes widened, their energy was at full power, no longer exhausted from the long walk. "You can restore energy for a different being?" Chizuru asked amazed, but then a look of worry took place of the shocked one. "Don't worry I hardly lost any of my energy. I'm perfectly fine." I say confidently waving my hand back and forth gesturing that I was okay. The mountain itself holds a disturbing aura as we start walking up a zig-zag road on the mountain. I look at what was under my feet, it looked fake for some reason. "This isn't a real mountain." I said aloud. Everyone's glances from their view of the land came straight to me. "What? This mountain is fake?" Heisuke asked, speaking for the first time since I yelled at him, Harada, and Shinpachi. "But how is it here then?" asked Souji. I took a few steps to the edge of the road and examined the mountain as much as I could.

"It must be a temporary battle place." I explained. Everyone still looked confused, so I explained a little more "My own kind as a pureblood can make their own battle fields or land features in place of the reality one. If it stays like that for a long period of time it will become reality itself, completely erasing the other landscape."

"Cool and scary." Heisuke said nodding his head up and down closing his eyes. _ 'It has probably only been a year and a half yet I feel so close to them, like family.'_ I thought to myself. When I joined the Shinsengumi I already felt like family in just 3 months. Now, they really mean a lot to me. I frown. _ 'But that just makes it harder for them. That man could just kill Chizuru first just to get Hijikata and everyone else riled up. Also the fact that they would be targeted to get to me as well. Time passes by fast.'_ "Shiro, hey, Shiroo!" I tense up and glance at Shinpachi who was calling me. "Are we going or not? It's already getting dark." Then I relaxed and looked at the sky noticing that the sky was indeed getting dark, a light blue left which has been pushed to the far horizon tinted with orange-red, with only the full moon shining down giving still little light, but enough to see where you would be going.

"Yes, we have to-"I was cut off because it turns out that uncle actually came to me first, sensing his aura seconds before reaching my blade to block his attack I force him away. He took a short glance at the people behind me then at my blade. It was the special kind that could even kill me if I wasn't careful (it was the one the other 'Shiro' summoned). "I see that you've made new friends. Too bad they won't last long, just like the others." The last 4 words I could tell he added to get on my nerves. Well, congrats to him it worked, I tight my grip on the handle which was like a long cylinder made of silver and metal, the middle of the two blades. The weapons uncle, Keinei, and I use were specially and only family made from the underworld, all of them were also coated with everlasting poison that could kill the user no matter who it was. The only reason why Keinei got one of the weapons is because uncle killed one of the family members entrusted with it. Although it was family made not all of them have them. Ones trusted with the responsibility of killing another would be the ones to wield them.

They were the ones who would help me keep balance with the world, eliminating those who were too powerful for humans or half breeds, but of course uncle found a way to kill them all. "I will not let you kill them. Not again." I angrily said. I run forward as fast as lightning, uncle blocked my attack pushing me back this time. He ran forward as well but not as fast. I side stepped and went behind me attempting a blow on the back, a deep one. Instead, the mountain rumbled making me lose my balance. I curse under my breath. He was the one who created this mountain meaning me can do what he wants with it until it becomes permanent. Hijikata with Saito, Kondou and Sannan switched blows against uncle, but he easily blocked every single one no matter how fast or strong. I send a message to them telepathically _'You guys keep him at bay. I need to destroy his source of power. The power he has now is not his, it took me a whole life to realize it. I detected it now, so keep him from following me.' _I give Souji, Chizuru, Harada, Heisuke, and Shinpachi a look to tell them to stay here as well.

I finally am starting to use my abilities as a demon being similar but not quite an oni. I jump up high that it almost two house lengths up side to side. Getting closer to the top, where the power was stored, a few more jumps and I arrived at the top. I walk to the center, a pedestal that held a glowing evil red aura blade that rested in a case that was left open. I raise my weapon to strike. Surely if I destroy this blade it will take back its' powers and disappear. Just about to make contact with the glowing blade the mountain suddenly split in half. I tried using my ability to fly but it somehow didn't work. Something was eating my energy away. I slightly narrowed my eyes in realizing it was the sword that was taking my demonic energy. Then I smelled blood, me falling and not being able to use my powers did not happen at a good time. I kept falling into the mountain unable to do anything more. I hit the ground in a matter of minutes and black out.

(Souji's POV) We all took turns trying to get a single cut on the guy but he was still able to block all of our moves, even Chizuru's. Then the Mountain started rumbling again, the mountain though split in half and I see someone falling. I already know who it is without guessing. As I see Shiro falling I can't help but wonder why Shiro isn't doing anything to prevent her from falling, but I see some light coming out of her. Then I realize something is taking away her demon abilities. I feel like running to catch her, but the mountain

was too wide at the base there wouldn't be enough time.

Shiro's body disappears in the dark hole of the mountain, then it closes up to be a regular mountain again. Shiro's uncle chuckles and then laughs out loud manically. We all stare at him with confusion, anger, and frustration of not being able to hurt him in any way. "Now, that she is out of the way for the moment what is the best decision to make her suffer this time?" He asks himself questionably. He casts his look at Chizuru, we form a wall to prevent him from getting to Chizuru.

"Now I see why she values all of you so, especially you there." He pointed at Chizuru. "You somewhat resemble Ami, that foolish little girl who took Shiro in as a sister. She deserved what she got." I glared at him. "You're family aren't you? So why are you hurting Shiro? And what are you doing to her now?" I asked narrowing my eyes angrily. "We are family but who cares about that? Shiro is the perfect tool to mold into my liking to control world and dimensions." Hearing this man talk made me feel disgusted. How dare he think of Shiro as just a tool. "What are you doing to her now?!" I repeated. His calm look becomes serious. "Ch, I'm just 'borrowing' her abilities. Right now, she is just black out inside the mountain." He answered almost tonelessly. Then his look became curious. "I wonder, should I kill you first or you fumbling so-called warriors?" He said to himself.

"If you so lay a hand on Chizuru I will kill you myself you disgraceful trash." I expected Hijikata to say this but a figure appeared behind Shiro's uncle. It was Kazama. He continued "Even though Shiro's kind isn't exactly known in this world I've still heard stories of her kind from their half breeds. 'The most honorable were the pureblooded main family' they would ramble on. Doing all sorts of work to maintain balance behind the scenes, it even shocks me to know about it." He glared at Shiro's uncle. "I could have ignored the fact until I met Shiro on the streets a long time ago." I eyes go wide. "You met Chizuru?" I asked.

But he ignores me which gives me my answer 'yes'. "Her powers as a pureblood are far more powerful than even pureblooded oni, and as far as I'm concerned she's more powerful than you, a pureblood but not a main family member. Also you disgust me as a demon yourself. You dirty your hands too much for your own greedy reasons not to mention that the overwhelming power is not yours. It was powerful enough that I sensed it on nearly on the other side of Japan itself." He interrogated. _'I have a bad feeling about this. Shiro isn't awake, and we're all in danger with that man around.'_ But we all continue to fight for a while. Even Kazama tried to make a blow on his body and also failed.

Shiro's uncle closed his eyes and opened them fast, we all couldn't move not even Chizuru or Kazama. He smirked, "I think I should kill you, Chizuru is it not? I can't wait to see my dear niece's face to see your dead body." He walked past us, to Chizuru who still showed her fear. "Get away from her!" Heisuke shouted, but our bodies froze. He walked closer stopping 5 to 6 inches away from her, raising his sword and pierces her heart cruelly drawing the sword back out. Chizuru fell to the ground blood leaking out too fast, eyes wide in shock and pain, slowly closing her eyes. "CHIZURU!" Hijikata shouted, gritting his teeth. We were really put in a bad situation now. One of might die next.

(Shiro's POV) I woke jolting up as if something woken me up. I look around to see that I was in a giant hollow space of stone. Then I remember that I fell. _'CHIZURU!_' I gasped and rubbed harshly against my forehead. A great aroma of blood wafted into the hollowed space, I recognized this blood as Chizuru's. Instantly I get and bang my hands against the wall. In frustration and rush I yell "AHHHHHG!" It echoed and ended softly. I bang harder, but the walls did not look any different. Then I grasped my weapon and swung at the wall, it made a crack, satisfied I swung my weapon multiple times before breaking through.

Then I see everyone standing looking at Chizuru's body covered with blood. I also notice Kazama. I gasp even louder looking at the scene. Uncle turned back to look at me. "It seems that you have let another friend die. You are not capable of protecting your friends, the punishment will be their deaths!" He exclaimed. As he stabbed started to stab some of the Shinsengumi members including Souji in the lower organs, they fell over wincing and gasping. My eyes water from seeing their pain, "Stop it please, leave them alone!" I hoarsely said. Souji managed to turn around and look at me. He tried to smile, just like the others when they died, they smiled. They smiled.

Painful emotions boiled inside me as I recall all of the other incidents of uncles' killing. But he continued to stab each of them. "STOP IT!" I yell louder and stronger. Then a bright glow of red and black surround me as I cry in agony. The ground beneath me cracked into pieces slowly rising up. The surge of my power grows and grows. My head turns to look straight at uncle who now looks terrified. "Im-impossible. You unlocked the houshinji." (houshinji-inner strength of power, which is near the impossible for many demons of any kind to possess and unlock to control).

One of my eyes are glowing blood red while the other dark purple. Uncle stood as if he was petrified himself. I sped over to attack his left arm and shoulder. My bandages on my right arm become undone, a new right arm appears. He screamed in agony as blood rushed out of his circulatory system onto the ground. I raise my arms to attack again, a blow on his neck was made as if flew into the air. His body lifelessly falling to the dirt ground along with his head. The mountain disappears and its original landscape comes back, a slightly hilly land with trees everywhere like a forest. The two glowing colors turn back to dark brown as I run over to Souji's side. He, Saito, Harada, and Shinpachi were still bleeding. Tears overflow slowly turning red.

"Looks like you defeated him. I told you that you...*cough* could do it." His smile still there as if waiting for me to see it again. I support him up while Hijikata, Kondou, Sannan, and Heisuke paid attention to the others wounded. "Don't talk." I sobbed. Putting my hand over his deep cuts, trying to heal them but too much bloodshed took place. Souji's eyes are only half opened now. "Listen, you better not die Souji. Stay awake a little longer, just a little longer." I pleaded, still crying.

I laid him back down and tried a different method to heal him until I heard a familiar voice behind me, along with the sound of a sword screeching in the air. "You underestimated me Shiro." Shocked, I turn slowly to see that he also murdered Heisuke, Hijikata, Kondou, and Sannan. "But how?" I muttered crying more than ever. He grimly smiled

"You will also be wiped of the face of this world, the universe, you've become a dull useless tool." I turn my head away, tightening my fists. "How could you!?" I screamed getting up to battle him once more. He smiled manically again. "It's too late for them Shiro. It was your blame to start with. I was even kind enough to show you signs to leave them and return to me. But you again refused to do so this is your punishment for the hundredth time." "They didn't deserve to die!" I retort. Switching attacks and blow with him, I swear that I will not rest until I see that man dead for good!

(Souji's POV) Everything started to become blurry. I hear Shiro telling me to stay awake longer, but the sensation to close my eyes was strong. '_I'm sorry, I don't think I can make it out alive Shiro.'_ With that in mind I close my eyes and everything goes black, but then I feel myself standing. I open my eyes, and I see the other Shinsengumi captains, Chizuru, and Kazama for some reason. We all gawk at each other until we see ourselves in a cell. A 6 year old girl with black brown middle-back length hair was in a corner across from us. There was hardly any light in the cell, but we all could tell that she was chained with heavy looking metal cuffs. Then we see a shadow of a man, he calls out to the girl who's hugging her knees, hiding her face. "Number 5364 your testing is set for you. Come out." He called in a firm strict voice. The girl slowly looked at the man, her eyes plain with a lazy look. Each step she took to get to the wall of the gate the chains would clatter on the stone ground and echo in the giant dark lit cell.

We see her walking out and other men taking off the chains and cuffs, they were carrying strange looking guns. '_Must have been the improved ones.'_ I thought. The man who called out her number and the girl herself walked to a room with a glass window on one side. Other men heavily guarded with armor and weapons stood in the empty space the room. "Laboratory number 237 for number 5364 to test out bullets." He shouted to the men across from them. One of them walked out of line with a gun, the girl was pushed onto a red x on the floor. The man aimed and pulled the trigger, the bullet went into the girl, about a minute later she starts screaming as the hole where the bullet pierced started rotting. Chizuru was covering her mouth with disbelief and horror.

A man with a higher rank looking uniform stood up from the glass side and walked toward the girl but stopped 2 feet in front. She stopped screaming her face was toward the tiled floor, "Well done number 5364 or should I say Shiro? You have been a very useful tool lately for our war." He smugly said. Our eyes widen, the little girl was Shiro herself when she was little and probably in a different life. The young Shiro spit on the mans' right boot. He looked disgustingly at it and roughly kicked Shiro in the head. She made no noise as she was kicked and continued to lie lifelessly on the floor. "Take number 5364 back to her cell." He ordered. Shiro was once again cuffed and chained then pushed into the cell. She went back to the corner and didn't say one word, going back to the same position.

Another scene was put into place. This time Shiro was around the age of 13 to 14 years old, she was also in a dojo, standing in front of an older man, probably the sensei of the dojo. His face was extremely serious looking, he held a wooden practice sword as did Shiro. "As the head of a powerful family you must practice your movements of attacking at least 1,000 times." He announced. Shiro nodded and ran forth her practice sword in the air. The time rushed by to showing

the 4th day, Shiro was still practicing, and she hadn't eaten or drank anything since the beginning of the training. Shiro gasped as she was pushed back too far and into a pole. But the sensei looked fine as if he just started the training a minute ago, Shiro was still gasping heavily for air as she continued to get up and attack. One time she didn't get up as fast. "Is this the farthest you can go? It has only been 400 attempts. Do you plan to disgrace your family honor for your own rest while others are working hard?" He harshly asked. Shiro immediately stood up, still tired but she kept on trying. It was finally the day when she attacked 1000 times after he announced 1000 Shiro lost grip of the sword and blacked out. It had taken a full 5 days of training without food or water.

But then the scene changed again, this time it was a house on fire, down the stairs was a girl and Shiro again. She was looking desperate and afraid, taking hold of one of the girls' hand. Shiro was crying, as we take a closer look we notice that the girl had gashes all over her body. There was also a body, molding and diseased. We hear Shiro cry out "Please Ami, you can't leave me yet, please stay alive." She sobbed. But the girl named Ami smiles back weakly there was not much life in her anymore "Shiro, I want you to know that you felt just like a real sister to me, and a real daughter to mom and dad." She was breathing too heavy to say more. "Shiro will things be okay?" Hearing this only made young Shiro sob more, "Yes, things will be okay I promise. So don't leave me please don't leave me alone too." Ami's smile became weaker "Shiro I wish you a blessed life. You don't have to kill unnecessary. Just search for the peace and happiness you wished for." With those last words Ami-chan closed her eyes, leaving Shiro to rise her sobbing.

Before all of the flashbacks go we hear Shiro shout something "Uncle I swear I will avenge Ami's death!" Everything blacks out for a moment then we hear a voice of a familiar former living warrior. "Those were only a part of what Shiro had to bear on her own." It was Kosu. "So that was what Shiro went through I had no idea." Heisuke admitted. The look of guilt crossed his face after the witness of Shiro's harsh treatment and loss. Kosu is standing in front of all of us who are in a not-so-crammed cluster, he smiles weakly. "Now that you all understand Shiro a little more you guys can go back now. Everyone sharing the same thought _'But how? We're already dead?_'_. As if reading our minds Kosu answers, "It's true that all of us here are dead. But you Shinsengumi, and Kazama need to go back to Shiro. All of us have been waiting for a time when she can spend more than 1 month with loyal friends so the time has come for us to completely use our energy to send all of you back. Your bodies will also heal of the injuries uncle gave you." He paused. "Do you wish to see Shiro is doing now?" Hesitant I hear the others gulp and I do too.

Chizuru was the first to speak, her voice shaky with uncertainty and fear, but curiosity was in the tones as well. "Y-yes." Kosu nodded, waving his hand, a screen like image appears surrounding us, Shiro is in there holding my dead body, crying blood. We take another look to see that she finally killed her uncle. I can feel our hearts aching to just reach out and show Shiro that we're right next to her. But her uncle's voice echoed. "All living things must die Shiro. All of them must go." Hearing this only made Shiro cry harder and harder, her muffled voice being filled with more sorrow, regret, and pain, her feelings reached even to me. She felt cornered and the one to blame. Chizuru was crying too. "Now, let me ask you guys something. Do you wish to be reunited with Shiro in your former body?" Kosu

asked more sternly. Tightening my fists, I shout "Yes we all want to be with Shiro again, together with her like before!" Kosu smiled one last time, everything went white and foggy. I hear Shiro's crying, this time it's clearer I feel her crying into my shoulder.

Shiro gasped and looked at my face to see my open eyes and that my body had been completely healed. Shiro's crying softened a bit as she held me again nearing crushing me I think. "Don't ever, do that again you guys hear?!" She asked in a loud also shaky voice. I smile, "I promise." Everyone looked happily at us, and Shiro's bloody tears became clear like pure crystal.

Hi anyone who's reading my story. Sorry if it's not as good as others. I tried my best so far and I hope you'll enjoy the rest of the chapters. And please go easy on me. If there's anything I didn't do right please inform me. Enjoy! ^.^

5. Chapter 5

(Shiro's POV) We had decided to go straight to headquarters since I'm the only one exhausted for some reason. Souji carried me in a bridal style all the way there. Once we arrived back everyone headed back to their own rooms. While Souji takes me to my room. He settles me down in my futon and sighs. "Thank goodness we came back to life it was thanks to Kosu and someone else he talks about." Souji provided. "You're right it's great that all of you guys were able to come back from the dead, that means when I wake up I can beat the life outta all of you." I said half joking and half serious at the same time. They really did worry me, one of my worries for example is like 'What would they do if they couldn't beat him?' or 'How will they help if they hardly knew anything about his techniques of fighting?' and 'What are they going to do if I got separated from them? I was the main weapon to destroy uncle, also the point that I had to go as far as to use my inner power. I could have used it a long time ago but I wasn't powerful enough nor did I know that I had it.

"Oh so that was Kosu's plan to use us as fresh meat for you to beat to death." Souji joked. I giggle, in the corner of my eye I see Souji lightly blushing which made me giggle more, to see the teasing Okita Souji blush in front of a girl, if you ask me it's unnatural. "Souji, did you and the others see anything else when you guys were dead?" I asked curious to know, even Kazama seemed to act a little nicer around me. Souji twitched a little, so something did happen. "Let me guess Kosu showed you fragments of my past lives huh?" I ask casually. Souji looked surprised at me then he turned away and looked at the door. "Yeah." He simply replied back.

I stare at his back. Something else was burning inside my chest, it was already nighttime, the full moon shone on the silent house. As quiet as I could I grasped my chest in pain I scream and yell my head instead of actually doing it out loud. Souji perked up and looked back at me, I let my right arm fall to my side as Souji looks back. "Hey Shiro you planning to do anything tomorrow?" He frantically asked. I shrank back a little surprised by his sudden question. "Uh-No?" I said uncertain raising a brow. Souji smiled wide obvious that he's happy and is planning something. "Good, we're planning to take you out somewhere tomorrow." He stood up and to the door pausing before leaving he whispered, "Sleep well, Hashiro." Then he was gone. I lightly blush as well, I know that Souji cared for me a lot but it

still doesn't feel right to just forget about the troubles I've been through and just live happily and carelessly. _'Althoughâ€¦.. big brother and everyone else must have waited for a time like this. So does it mean I can finally live peacefully for many years to come?' _A small smile spread across my lips as I lie down and fall asleep.

I felt a warm light on my eyelids as I open them to see the blinding early sunrays. I slowly get up yawning. I get dressed and comb my hair, sitting in front of my desk. In the distance I hear footsteps becoming louder and louder running from the other side of the estate. "Shiro, shiro C'mon let's go!" Heisuke shouted in a chanting way. Slamming open my door, hard enough that I thought it would actually break. He also smiles wide running towards me taking hold of my left arm then pulling me out of my room, making me drop my comb. While running wildly with him I ask "Heisuke what's the big deal?" But he kept on pulling me really fast that I almost tripped a couple times to who knows where. When I thought he didn't hear me he answered panting "It's a surprise." He said it in an extremely sing-song happy-go-lucky tone which made me feel awfully suspicious.

When we finally stop I find myself panting, standing in front of fancy store next to other shops. It had a wood like smell to it with some other variety of food. I look questionably at Heisuke "What exactly are we doing here?" Heisuke only kept his happy grin on as he walked or you could say marched into the store. I shrug and walk in as well. It was dark surprisingly; the windows were blocked of sunlight. "Hey Heisuke where are you?" I called out only the silence answered back. I looked around the very dim place sensing no harm of any sort. I keep walking forward a light spicy smell flowed into the room. Almost noon time already I follow the scent till it became strong, the smell came from another room in the back of the store. I opened the door squinting due to the unknown burst of light shining through. I look at the scene: Heisuke standing with Shinpachi and Harada in the left corner of the spacious room, Chizuru, Hijikata, Kondou, and Sannan in the right corner, Saito and Souji apart from each other in front of a table, all smiling welcome at me.

Before I knew it I was smiling as well. Souji said one thing "Welcome Shiro, we've been waiting to surprise you for a while now." He said happily. Everyone I really cared about was standing right there in front of me, not far away, not glaring at me, and not despising me. I've never felt so happy before. Stifling back my tears I run into Souji's open arms. I can feel that he's smiling wider, slowly pushing away I look at him. He looked at everyone as if ready to lecture about something. "From this moment on Shiro and I are engaged." He boldly announced loud and clear. I look stunned, blushing from the last word. "Any objections?" I looked away trying to hide my face that's probably as close to a red tomato. Souji continued "Then its official, 2 months from now is our marriage." I stiffened and made tense eye contact. "Wait just 2 months why so soon?!" I inquire. Souji smirked "Why so no one else can have you of course. Now you belong to me." He answered smug. I looked away again feeling embarrassment. Souji pulled me closer in his embrace.

I let it be, for the rest of the day almost everyone dragged me from one place to another, but I didn't feel tired from it at all and just as Heisuke said they did take me out to eat at dinner. We all enjoyed the night together laughing and eating delicious food. When we return to headquarters we separate to our rooms, but Souji follows me to my

room instead of his. He looked the other way as I changed into a comfortable yukata, sitting down on my futon Souji sits as well, back to back. "Why are you in my room?" I finally ask. Souji leaned more on my back "Well we're engaged now, so might as well get used to each other as much as possible." I position myself to look at his face moving from his back. "But why my room?" He looks at me as if he was about to explain something easy like 'What is 1+1?' "C'mon let's go to sleep." With that Souji laid on the other side of my large futon giving me enough space to toss and turn in. _'He must be doing that to just comfort me a little.' _I thought as I too fell asleep.

The next day I decided to sleep in later. Waking up around noon when it was busiest in headquarters. I walked around inspecting rooms to make sure that they were clean. Otherwise everything was normal, until after dinner. I was eating with everyone minding my own business when I heard the other me speak "Your time with those men are limited now, you forget you still have me. From this point on I will use your energy of happiness to keep myself alive as a spirit within you." She declared one sided. After she was done informing me what she intends to do with me the horrible headache came back like a loud thunderstorm raging through from the clear sky. Hiding the pain as much as I could I dismissed myself from the room and quickly left for my room, once in there my headache didn't hurt as much but what hasn't happened to me for a while was arising, my lust for blood.

It disgusted me how I longed for blood like mythical vampires, so I decided to seal the 'vampire' self of me away. Unfortunately it seems to have broken through and now the urge to drink blood was even stronger.

Every time I wanted blood my throat would feel like it's burning dry, it would be like you not drinking water or any fluid for 2 to 3 days straight. It was getting darker, laying down in my futon I could still hear some of the men talking loudly and laughing. After an hour to two I heard footsteps. Using my demon abilities I sensed it was Souji coming to check up on me. He opened the door as little as he could, but when he saw my right arm twitch slightly he knew I was awake, he still closed the door quietly though.

"You okay? You'd usually stay until everyone leaves." Souji asked, coming to sit by me. "I'm fine." I say but it was muffled because I pulled the blanket over to my nose. Of course Souji wasn't content just hearing that, he forced me to turn over as he puts the back of his hand on my forehead. Then he switched sides having a serious-concerned face plastered on. "You have a fever. When did you get it and do you know how?" He questioned hurriedly. I small smile was applied on my lips. "Don't worry it'll go away soon enough." I cooed. To try to assure him I rest my hand on his arm. "It doesn't look like it will go away." He argued studying closely to my face. Then he back out sitting straight, his eyes gleaming as if he discovered something important. "You're hiding something." He concluded confidently.

I quietly snort to myself, _'That man can see right through my acting no matter how good it is.' _ Then he went back to that serious stare. "What are you hiding?" He asked more demanding. I just lay there looking back at him, thinking of how I am going to explain this. "A long time ago similar to rasetstu I would sometimes have a vampire impulse to want to drink blood, problem is it doesn't necessarily happen when I see blood, it just happens out of nowhere. And it

caused me more pain as I avoid drinking blood for 6 years in the past life. My body was getting weak, I later on chose to seal the blood lusting side of me away. But as you can probably guess the lust for blood is back and I don't know how it did. I just know that it started somewhere around noon or dinner time today." I answered.

My eyes turn dark red with a little hazy purple. Fangs appeared then disappeared within a blink of an eye, I gripped my chest gasping. Souji was already towering over me asking if I was alright and what I needed. The next minute the impulse passed by as I returned to normal. Souji looked nervous and extremely worried. "You just have to drink blood right? It won't drive you mad will it?" Souji asked. I nod, drinking blood (which I've never done before) should only be for sustain since we can live for a long time. But I shot Souji a defiant stare "Don't do it, I won't drink your blood or anyone else's." I firmly stated. Souji still looked unsatisfied but eventually nodded back joining me in slumber after a while.

No matter how I look at it the other Shiro will be involved with everything._ 'She'll try to kill them as well soon enough. Then what would I do if she manages to turn the tides so that she gets the points? She would win a complete take over, and it could even be permanent. Even though she has been in sleep for a long time I still know her well enough that she's as smart as me, which proves to be even more troublesome. Every one of the captains including Chizuru and Kazama were already killed once, resurrecting them twice is nearly impossible even us demon beings have rules.'_ I grit my teeth, my finger were even twitching at the frustration and anger.

'_What will I choose to do? Let her control me so that she'll leave the Shinsengumi alone or fight against her and risk losing the Shinsengumi and Chizuru again?_' I shake my head, lowering it. Souji had already woken up like everyone else and was either patrolling, practicing, or roaming around the mansion. I got up and decided to walk around greeting the members of the Shinsengumi. It was only a week since I had that stupid headache and now I'm walking freely like nothing ever happened.

As it was getting darker I for some reason wanted to go walk outside of the Okura home (or headquarters). So I left but I made sure to tell Chizuru to inform anyone who asks about me when I leave. Finishing that chore, I left the entrance gate at walked through town. I have to say that it was actually pretty pleasant. Almost everyone who looked at me smiled kindly. It was dark enough now that some lanterns were lit and hung outside the store or gate to a persons' home. Walking in the quiet cool night was very calming, I kept walking till I realized I started walking out of town as well. I turn back and jogged back until I could see the restaurants and inns. I slowed down to walking again and enjoyed the view.

I watch people come and go not realizing that I'm not watching where I was going and bumped into Souji. I quickly did a little bow "I'm sorr- Souji? What are you doing here?" I ask once I actually saw his face, he lightly smiled. "I can't have you kidnapped at a time like this. Also I thought that you would actually stay inside the gates, you really shouldn't be wandering around even though you can protect yourself, they say that strength can come in numbers." He said obvious he was doting on me. I giggle to myself, Souji heard my little laughter and casted me a curious look.

I brightly smile "It sounds more like something I would say. We're really only engaged and yet you treat me as though I'm a naïve 7 year old." I reply to his blank face. He rubbed my head. "If you don't want me to keep doting on you then you'd better stay in safer places." Souji then lifted me up in bridal style and carried me. "Souji I can still walk." I complained gently hitting his shoulder. He looked content as he answered "I'm not putting you down until we're at headquarters." I pouted.

During dinner we had another fun time eating and chatting with each other, little did I know that things would change in very little time. When I woke up the next day my body was pulsing, it felt like I was going to be torn to pieces. I started screaming in pain immediately making Souji wake up. Then I felt like one of my organs was being torn out as a misty fog emerged from me, stabilizing into the other being of hatred that was created in my subconscious. This time we are separate beings now, she is no longer a part of me since my hatred started disappearing. Shiro, no, I should call her something else. "Siletta." I said both mentally and verbally. She smirked evilly "So now I have a new name. That's good I hate being called the same name as you, you were once powerful and strong but now you have been reduced to this pathetic state. It's shameful to just look at you." She coldly stated glaring at Souji and me.

"Before I can kill your precious 'friends' and fiancé I must send you somewhere else to die so that you'll stay out of my way." I tried standing up but my energy was mostly drained. Gasping for breath I manage to ask "How did you separate yourself from me?" Footsteps sounded soon, coming closer then stop. Hijikata opened the door to see Siletta standing in his view of Souji and me. " 'Shiro'." He muttered now also glaring. Siletta defiantly shook her head "No, my creator changed my name it's now Siletta." She introduced her name. She made a few crossed hand signs toward me smiling wider, I felt light all of a sudden as I looked at my hands and see them glowing, slowly disappearing. Souji held on to my fading body trying hard to hold back tears. "Shiro don't go you have to stay." He whispered longingly to my ear.

Siletta raised her right arm facing the sky making the roof above her crumble away into dust "I Siletta of hate that once was growing inside Shiro will send her away to die." She exclaimed. Bright light gathered in her palm, the wind seemed to be picking up into a tornado. Now everyone was awake running around in panic and shouting. The Shinsengumi captains though held their ground. My body disappeared even more, Souji tightly grasped more but my body evaporated. Too tired to open my eyes to see the scene I keep them closed and fall asleep.

The sun was shining, I found myself sleeping in front of the Shinsengumi headquarters, Takumi's home. I slowly got up, confused. I remember Siletta transferring me to a different world if I can recall correctly, but this place looks no different than the one I just left, _'Could it be a parallel world?'_ I thought. _'Or was it all just a dream? Siletta becoming her own being, meeting the Shinsengumi, was all of that a mere dream?'_ I shake my head _'No! That was all real! I know it I've never been able to feel such happiness before and for a long time, it surely isn't a dream.'_ I walk inside the gates and see them instantly on the steps looking all down and sad. I walk closer to the group "Umm, are you guys okay?

What happened?" I asked bending down to look at their downcast faces. Then their faces lit up as they heard my voice. "Shiro, is that really you? You're alive!" Heisuke exclaimed. They all look the same and somewhat act the same way, but I don't know if I've either been sent to a different world or I've been gone for a while everyone thinks I'm dead and then I show up in the same world. Souji was the first one to come to me of course. He hugged me tightly, as if I was actually back from the dead. "Shiro, I glad you're okay." He said in a hushed tone.

I raise my eyebrow "Yes, I'm fine. But what happened to Sileta?" Everyone stared at me in curiosity. "Who's Sileta?" Harada asked voicing everyone else's thought. I examined everyone one of their faces, "Sileta, remember she sent me to a different world." I study very hard at their faces as they become blanker with confusion. I sighed deeply _'It's not them. Not the real them, if it was they should have remembered Sileta.'_ I faked a smile "Oh, well never mind then. Silly me I must have imagined someone." I say, my hands fanning them. Their happy expressions changed onto serious ones, actually almost glaring! "W-w-what?" I stutter. Hijikata spoke this time "Shiro I will not ask you how you came back but I will ask you where you came." My head tilted to the right, "Huh?" I concentrate on what I was thinking about before for a conclusion. He continued on as if I didn't say anything though, "You were killed by a man who goes by as Kosu. I remember Chizuru and the other members of the Shinsengumi came to get us but you were already dead when they arrived. We buried you before we left as well and yet you're standing in front of us right now." He explained disbelievingly.

I straighten my head back into place as the name he mentioned surprised me with a dull pain following afterward. _'Kosu?! The Kosu I know? But even he would rebel against killing me. In this world are we enemies or perhaps we were friends?'_ I opened my mouth to ask about Kosu but closed them thinking more about my words. _'They probably won't guess I'm from a different world. But how do I get back to my own world? I want to be with the Shinsengumi and Chizuru who had been friends with me for a while. They know more about me than the versions here. What'll I do?'_ I make an overly tired yawn as I walk up to the hallway with them. "Well I'm tired I just need to rest for a bit." I say even though it's only noon.

As the days passed by I got to know more and more of the Shinsengumi here, but there was one thing that certainly hasn't changed, they treated me with the same kindness and hospitality. That was for sure, and to think that I would feel welcome here within just 5 days. It was driving me crazy. It felt as if I was living in an illusion for those days that soon became weeks to months. Little by little I was losing a piece of myself, it didn't settle right with my soul to think that I could just live here in a parallel world and forget the ones who I was with before Sileta came into place. Every night now I cry the sorrowful tears became tears of longing, and loneliness. It mattered not how the Shinsengumi was kind to me in this world I miss the friends I had in the world where I came from.

All those months I didn't tell them that I was the Shiro they knew and that she was actually dead. I just couldn't think of a way to say it to them without hurting them. So I decided to stay there longer and longer until it was a year. On the first day of the New Year though, I heard voices in my head. They sounded just like the Shinsengumi I know, it made me happy to know that they were safe in

their world. But I continued to cry every night hiding from the Shinsengumi I'm living with now. There was no way I could reach their minds from here, I can't make a portal or anything to bring myself back, but I'm guessing Sileta had something to do with it. The next day I spent eating with the Shinsengumi it was lonelier than it had ever been before. At that time I tear fell from my eyes drawing unwanted attention. "Eh, Hashiro-chan you okay?" Souji asked leaning over his tray looking surprised and curious. I swept the tear away and smiled "Yeah I was just thinking of something a little sad. Heh heh." I put my hand over my forehead and a part of my eye to show that I was embarrassed. "Awwwww." Souji teased, I can tell he's holding back a smirk. "Oh, be quiet you." I chided and left the dining room.

Now, I am sweeping around headquarters to help Chizuru. I was the one who swept by the entrance, the cool winter breeze came by blowing gently. But since I was actually waiting for the patrol teams to return I decided to stay there and keep weeping. In the corner of my eye I see a tall man walking this way, I wasn't paying much attention to him so I don't know all the details. When he stopped in front of me I looked up and dropped my broom, my mouth opened in shock. The man had short reddish-brownish hair and green eyes. He face was also as shocked as mine as we stare at each other. "S-souji?" I quivered. "Shiroâ€¦. That is you right?" Seeing the Souji I knew made me cry again, surprisingly. I run and hug him tightly stifling other tears; he stood stunned for a moment then hugged me back as passionately. "I finally found you." He said in a relieved tone. I look at him wondering "Souji how did you get here though?" He smiled, it was such a long time since I saw him smile face to face. "Turns out that when I proclaimed you as my fiancÃ© a fraction of your powers were implanted in me as your strange demon tradition thing, so I was able to use some of it to come to this place, luckily I can still sense where you are even though it's been a year now." I look away, my cheeks burning from the information that he still recognizes me. I think about what the other Souji would do or say if he saw himself with me. "You know the other you is on patrol I wonder how I should tell him about himself from a different world." I think out loud. By hearing this seemed to be funny to Souji because he started laughing almost uncontrollably. He bent down putting weight on his knees, "Yeah I can't wait to see my own face." He said when he was done laughing of course. Now that I'm a little glad I'm a demon, without the demon powers Souji wouldn't have been able to come here, not that I don't like the version of him here it's just that I really missed this version of him and the others over the year. "So where's the other me?" Souji asked with flimsy curiosity. "And also I'm wondering how did you feel when you stayed in this world?" I dodged his piercing eyes as I think of a word to describe my first intention appearing here and living in with them. "Umm, well it felt capacious at firstâ€¦.BUT I got used to living here with the versions of you and the rest of the Shinsengumi." I reply a little hoarse and bold at the same time.

The sun was starting to go down when I was thinking of when the other Souji should return. And just that moment he came, he stopped walking his arms folded behind his head while he had a confused-stunned face. Then his face went back to normal "Ehh? How come there are 2 of me?â€¦.Oh," He lightly hit his left palm with the other hand, "Does that mean the two of us were meant to annoy Hijikata-san together? You know they say the more the merrier and it also means double the fun." He said smiling as if proud of something. On the other this

just makes things more difficult to leave. We have to, for the balance of our own worlds. I made my decision to finally say it "Listen, Souji I'm not your Shiro." I say averting my eyes to look him straight in the face instead I look at the ground at his feet. I take a deep breath before hesitantly continuing "I am from this Souji's world." I gesture to the one beside me "I was here only because an evil being separated from me and somehow created a passageway for me to come to this world. We're similar but different in other ways." I paused again my eyes became teary; I felt my voice shake slightly from the emotion, "I'm sorry I couldn't bring myself to tell you and everyone else that I was from a different world. Furthermore I was afraid that you guys would reject me and abandon me like some people did when they found out who I truly was. But I can't blame them or you if they felt that way, I know what it was like to be used and tricked." I depressingly admitted, I tried to sound happy at the same time which was becoming harder to manage.

The other Souji didn't say anything he just looked the same as he walked over to me. He stood in front of me for a while then suddenly embraced me holding me tighter almost as if he'd never let me go, after a long moment of hugging him we separated. I took a glance at my fiancé Souji, he didn't look bothered by it at all. That prompted me to smile because Souji understood how the other one was feeling. After all I've disappeared from his world for a long year.

Which made me think "Souji how did you feel when I was gone. Are you okay now?" I ask. He smiled "Heh, I will admit I really did worry for you the whole time. But it seems that the version of me here had a really great time with you so I guess I'm alright now that I get to see you again." I smile sadly then make eye contact with the other Souji "We'll be leaving. Please tell everyone else for me that I'm not the Shiro you all know. I wish you and the Shinsengumi a prosperous and peaceful life here." I wave my hand using part of Souji's power to create a vortex to send us back to our world. As we step half way through I look back to see the Souji standing there with a sad face. I turn away nearly shedding a tear '_I'm sorry.'_ I tell him telepathically.

When I opened my eyes we were outside of the Shinsengumi headquarters just like before at dusk. But when everyone else saw me Chizuru started crying and they all looked full of relief. '_No doubt it is them. The Shinsengumi I've been with.'_ They decided to hold a celebration for me since I came back safe and sound from Sileta's warping power of teleportation to parallel worlds. I enjoyed it here back to my real home, but deep inside I felt sad that I had to leave the other versions of the Shinsengumi behind, it feels almost as if I've betrayed them. That whole time when everyone was partying I was outside looking at the stars. '_It's wonderful they haven't changed much, I really did miss them.'_ I told myself. '_But now that I think about it what ever happened to Sileta?'_ It was hard to think of how they defeated her depending how long it took, but now I feel so guilty.

1 is pretending to be the other version of me with the other Shinsengumi and then just abandon them after a year later, 2 the Shinsengumi here were worried for me the whole time I was gone and yet I tried to have fun knowing that they were probably looking for me, and 3 now for some reason I feel alone. No matter how I consult myself I always feel terrible in the end even though it wasn't what everyone was thinking or feeling about. It felt like something is

tearing me apart from the inside, that I'm slowly disappearing. So many things have happened within 3 years with the Shinsengumi. _'But now I feel like I don't belong here anymore or with the other Shinsengumi. It feels frustrating why do I have to feel so horrible after I've just been reunited with my best friends and fiancÃ©?! Why is everything getting so tremendously complicated? WHY, WHY, WHY?!' _ I roughly grind the sides of my head in anger and confusion. I let my tired arms fall to my sides. Sitting out at a clear night is calming and nice. Hearing footsteps I calm myself more to the point where I could at least fake a decent smile.

"Hard to smile at this kind of time huh?" _'Knew it, he saw right through. How does he do that again?' _I look up at Souji "Hey, how do you manage to be able to tell how I feel?" I ask in a complaining way. He chuckled "I can't say how I do it just comes naturally to me to know how you feel for some reason." I stared at him surprised as he comes over to sit next to me. We then talked and laughed with each other 'till it was dawn.

Waking up in the middle of the day I help Chizuru clean and cook. Most of the guilt I let last night went away but the one that I'm feeling now is bugging me more. As the days passed to weeks I got used to being back to my real home. I still remember the other versions of the Shinsengumi and I probably always will. Anyways aside from being home, 2 weeks later Souji and I were officially married. Living together along with the Shinsengumi we all felt safe and happy. Now I'm helping Chizuru and the servants cook lunch for everyone. After putting all the dishes in order in the dining room I left to the entrance gate to wait for Souji and his group to come back to eat. I kicked some small stones while waiting a minute or so, two people came walking up to me instead. They looked like a young couple in their early 30s.

The woman asked "Excuse me, by any chance are you Tategawa Hashiro?" My eyes widen by hearing my last name, _'How on earth does she know my full name? I swear I've never seen her before. Is she a demon?' _ "Yes." I answer flatly. The couple gasped for relief just when Souji and his group finally came. He walked on over standing next to me "Do you know these people?" I shake my head "But it seems those two know, they even know my last name." The married couple smiled when they heard me say this. Then the man said "We can't blame you for not remembering, after all we sealed away your memories of us." His happy expression as the woman changed to ones of sorrow and regret. I narrow my eyes at them. The idea slowly came to my head. I reluctantly asked "Are you two my real birth parents?" They looked shocked but acted as if it was normal. "Yes we are. We were watching over you for a while." The woman said as if she was shy.

I clench my hands into fists, _'They claim to be watching over me but they didn't stand up from the people who were harassing me especially if they were alive?! I suffered being reborn and abused so many times and now they just show up?!' _"That can't be true." I mutter. In the corner of my eye I can tell the woman wanted to say something but sighed and held it back the man talked in her place. "We know that you've been lonely but-" "But what?!" I interrupted, "You knew I was suffering and alone yet you stayed in the shadows and let those horrible people hurt me when I was defenseless?! If the both of you were really there you should have heard me saying 'My parents will come. They'll come back for me they will.' But you didn't you just watched me suffer all those years. Even Kosu tried helping me at one

time but my 'parents' didn't!?" I screamed wavering because of my anger and disbelief. I was starting to cry again, this really is the most painful thing knowing that your real birthparents were alive and watching you but didn't do anything to help when it was needed the most. I was to the point where I would fall to my knees but I forced myself to continue standing.

"I believed that both of you would come and take me back so that we could be a happy family. But you guys chose to let me rot alone for so long. How could you!?" I moped. I am fed up with this sadness and ran from them, wiping my tears that are tainted with blood. "Shiro!" Souji called out but I couldn't hear him. I don't want to see those two faces again the ones who claimed to be my birthparents. There's no way that I will forgive them, never. Being isolated, used, lied to, and abused harshly with weapons, and now knowing that my parents were there all along just watching and doing nothing. _'How can I just forgive so easily? Why does it have to be __**them**__ who are my parents? Why did they abandon me with other people?_' With many painful emotions ripping in my chest I just kept running and running until it feels like my heart and lungs will explode and bleed to death.

Gasping for breath I observe my surroundings and leaned against a tree by a river. Slowly I slid down to sit and watch the rain fall for the night. I gaze at the clear starry sky until slumber took over.

(Souji's POV) Still standing there after Shiro ran away I turn my attention to her so-called birthparents. I glare at them Shiro has been smiling willfully until they showed up. She hasn't been that depressed for a long time now. Hijikata and everyone else came rushing out to see what was going on and took notice that Shiro was gone and that there were two strangers in front of the gate. Ignoring their presence for now I angle my body away but my head turned to the two strangers. "Is what Shiro said true?" I asked in a deadly tone, the both took a small step back sensing my anger. The woman's eyes are filled with fear as she stuttered her answer "Y-yes. We had our own boundary lines at the time and couldn't save her until now." I looked at them from head to toe and countered "But Shiro said that you _could_ have saved her far back then. I don't see why you would be bound by boundaries." My eyes soften back to normal. I turn back to them and started my way to where Shiro left. The man spoke in a surprisingly rough voice, "Do you intend to go after her human?" Though I didn't answer because I figured out as well they chose to abandon Shiro and watch from a distance. My only main worry now is Shiro, an hour and a half passed by I came up to a river with a figure sitting in front of it. Shiro was resting her forehead on her knees that are being hugged by her arms. A depressing aura shrouded her along with denial. It was already night time the moon shone making the water shimmer. Walking closer Shiro lifts her head up and looks at the shining water. Lowering her eyes she parted her lips "Say Souji, how would you feel if your parents left you on purpose? And stayed distance watching you suffer-" She paused putting her hands on the ground curling them into tight trembling fists. "wouldn't you feel sad? And after just finding it out centuries later in the life's you've been reborn." She stopped again, hiding her face with her dirty hands.

"I've-I've lived for so long and suffered for it, and yet in the end I find out that my parents watched me from a distance not even

lending out a hand when I needed support." Just barely I hear her cry and sniffing so quiet you wouldn't think she was crying at all. This obviously bothered me, she tried her best to bottle up every sadness and anger but it leaked out and her feelings came rushing back. She only found me and the Shinsengumi after the many years of horrible labor and testing's. Then I clenched my own hands into fists. _'Why would parents abandon their child and watch her from afar the whole time of her life? It's just unfair, she did her best to cope with the dictators for the sake of her friends and family. And they didn't do anything. Despicable!_' I thought angrily. I walked over and sat by Shiro putting my arm over her shoulder and resting my hand on her head. "C'mon, can't stay here crying now can we? Let's go back, you're not alone anymore at the least you have me." Shiro wiped away her tears with the back of her hand which is the clean side. She made a little smile "Uh-huh." Helping her get up we take our time walking back, enjoying our alone time together. It also feels like she's calm down, I hope there won't be another day when I have to see her with that painful and sorrowful face again. Unlike the other times this time it was more agonizing for her, and knowing that her parents abandoned her was enough to make her run away bother me. But all I can do now is comfort her.

* * *

><p>This is my next chapter hooray! And I'm sorta running out of ideas for the chapter after the next one so if you guys have any ideas go ahead and type the in the review section. Hope you guys liked my story. ^.^<p>

6. Chapter 6

(Shiro's POV) After Souji took me back to HQ I went to sleep trying hard to ignore the odd meeting yesterday. It took a while for me to be completely calm talking about that subject but I've been able to move on from that event. After I returned the couple never came back, probably just watching me from afar again, either that or they're actually planning to leave me alone and stop stalking my life. Aside from that today is really nice outside its sunny and breezy plus the fact that I can use my powers again. Since the incident with Siletta I lost most of my demonic energy even when I was with the parallel world with the Shinsengumi. But now I've completely regained my power to the maximum and can use it whenever I want to.

I walk through the same hallways again, at a steady pace I watch as everyone is doing their job and practicing. It was mid noon when Souji came back from patrol. When I looked in his eyes there were full of misery and pain, I froze standing still as he continued to walk pass me averting his gaze to anyone. Once I got a hold of myself I ran after Souji to our room. He was sitting facing away from me, I quietly close the door sensing an awful aura around him. I spoke in a hushed tone almost whispering "Souji are you okay?" I walk toward him halfway when he nearly shouted "Get away from me!" I stopped in my tracks confused and worried. I try to speak to him again "Souji, what happened? Why are you upset?" I couldn't help but feel my heart sinking, something was wrong about him today he usually smiles at me when he returns from patrol, but today was different.

He stood up and walked to me, at first I thought he was going to confess what was wrong instead he grabs my wrist and opens the door

and pushes me out. He slams the door shut leaving me to fall. I get up opening the door again but this time it wouldn't open. I pulled on the door again, it didn't open. Desperate I bang on the door to break them but they remain the same after pounding them with my fists. Even more desperate I call his name "Souji! Souji open the door!" I put my ear against the door intending to listen, there wasn't a sound. Worry was driving me crazy as I continue to shout his name, he didn't answer. I continued to shout until Chizuru and everyone else came running toward me. "What wrong?" Kondou kindly asks. And when I answer for some reason I'm breathing deeply for air like I've been suffocating "Souji! He's also not saying anything! He just ignores me. He told to stay away from him and the door won't open either! what do I do? I don't know what to do." I panic even more causing me to breathe even more heavy, Chizuru is trying to calm me down as Hijikata and the other captains are trying to open the door.

Heisuke grunted pulling on the door, "No use it..geh! won't budge." Just as they positioned to break the door something seems to have caught my attention "Stop!" I scream, everyone looking at me. My eyes widen as I recognize the scent "I-I smell blood! It's Souji's!" Then they all widen their eyes as well, somehow breaking the door down. When I ran in Souji wasn't there anymore. Tears welled in my eyes as confusion, pain, and worry were racing in my head. "Souji. Where is he?! Souji!" I cry out. Falling to my knees I hit the tatami mat muttering "What happened to him? Where is he? Someone please just tell me." I grit my teeth as Kondou ordered everyone to search for Souji. Before leaving he said to me "I'm sorry Shiro. We'll find for you, please wait for him." With that it was only Chizuru and I alone in the room. Frustrated with myself tears fell from my eyes. "Why didn't I do anything?!" I scold myself. Chizuru stayed sitting in front of me, gently rubbing my shoulder. "It's not your fault. You didn't know what was wrong and he didn't tell you what it was, so you're not one to blame." She cooed.

Slowly my tears came to a stop as I stood up clenching my fists until blood leaked from my palms. The room was tense and very still for a moment, then within the next second a powerful surge of demonic energy exploded from my body making the whole room shake and wobble. Footsteps sounded from the hallway as Takumi opens the door letting the gust of wind building up in the room out. Unfortunately Chizuru sat in awe and fear just staring at my form which has only changed slightly.

My dark brown-auburn eyes turn unnatural dark purple almost like indigo, my hair lengthens a few more inches while turning into more of a black color, and my strength is at medium extent. In this state I can easily make the ground and earth I'm standing on crumble to dust in 1 minute. But instead I return to my normal self and run past Takumi who looks down at the floor. I know what he's thinking though, he wished that he could do more for me. Already though what he has done is enough. I do not wish for him to think he's useless. I don't want anyone to think they're useless because that's not true. I think everyone has their own purpose they just have to search for it if they don't know.

(Souji's POV) The sun was beating down on me and my unit as we patrolled town. Still people are talking behind our backs, but only one of them had my attention the most. A man sitting in front of a

shop whispered to another man sitting next to him "Those Shinsengumi really have nasty weapons to use." And the man next to him asked back "What do you mean by that?" he answered "I heard that they held a young woman in their headquarters but she is not human, a different being and rank in life, they say that it's a demon." He whispered gravely. Knowing that the punks were speaking about Shiro I held back my anger wishing them to stop their chatting. But he continued "And also rumor has it that they let her out at night for her to kill innocent people and eat their bodies. This morning before leaving the main bridge I saw blood splattered by the river. There were only bones but I can tell that the flesh was torn off." I stopped in my tracks ordering my men to go on back to headquarters before me, I turn and I walk up to the men whispering about.

As they noticed me walking their way they stopped chattering and went back to eating. "Tell me where did you hear those rumors?" I ask serious. But they didn't pay any attention to me, they continued eating and talking about other things in their life. I asked one more time but they still ignored me and tired of their stubbornness I drag the men to an alleyway. Roughly I push the man to the wall, "Now I'm only going to ask you one more time: Where did you hear those rumors?" The man was obviously afraid because he was already shaking. Putting my hand on the hilt of my sword he started sweating then fessed up "Aright, Alright! A woman was said to be telling townspeople to watch out or monsters that you Shinsengumi have been hiding at night. We didn't trust the woman at first but then some of us saw some blood and bones at the places she described to see them in the morning recently now." I tighten up my grip on the hilt hearing the man gulp "I swear that's all I know! You can ask other people about her. The rumors probably spread to Osaka by now." I glare at him before leaving and run to the main bridge. And indeed there were bones and blood by the river.

And surprisingly no one is around, when the wind blew by I heard rustling in the bushes. I throw a rock toward the bush it shifted then stopped, a human form stood in front of it smiling evilly. It was Siletta. "Well by now I can guess that you've heard the rumor I created. Smart huh?" She asked gaily. I unsheathe my sword, as she started walking towards me. "Oh, come now do you really want to hurt me? Your wife's twin?" I tighten my grip at the words she spoke to me "You are nothing more than an abomination." I say harshly. "Lucky for Shiro I'll kill you in her place." She cackled "Do you really think it's that easy? You don't even know how to control your own powers from her. I can easily take control of your body right now if I wanted to." "As if." I spat. She narrowed her eyes at me then smiled again and snapped her fingers, as if I was a puppet I couldn't move a muscle.

"Heh, now that you are under my control shall I send you to Shiro to break her heart? Or should I make you suffer first and make you kill your foster father by your own hand?" She asked questionably. My glare tensed. After a while of silence her face lit up "I know I'll make Shiro suffer by giving you to her for 5 minutes then I'll come and take you away from her." She paused and giggled "That will really make her devastated to know that her husband would leave her and come to me as an ally will crush her. Not to mention you betraying your friends as well. From here on you cannot disobey me and if you do manage to do so Shiro and Chizuru will pay dearly. Now you wouldn't want that now would you?" She then ordered me to catch up with my men and told me to go to my room the first thing when we arrived.

When I saw Shiro I tried to smile but it ended oppositely, after entering my room I hear her running and slamming the door open with an extremely worried expression worn across her face. "Souji what happened? Why are you upset?" She calmly asked walking slowly toward me. Unwillingly Siletta's voice comes into my head forcing me to say back "Get away from me!" Even though I couldn't see her face I knew that Shiro was in shock of hearing those words. Without further delay Siletta told my mind to send Shiro out of the room, which I did, when I closed the door Siletta appeared in front of me.

"You have been a very good boy Souji, but the times up." I hear the door wobble slightly making noise, after a minute I hear Shiro telling me to open the door. I muster all of my strength to go and walk to the door to open it but Siletta summoned a blade and cuts my arm almost detaching it. As I clenched the wound in agony I hear everyone else come to the door. "Hmm, we've been drawing too much attention. Let's go now, I know a perfect place for you to stay in for a while." With that said she snapped her fingers and we disappeared.

Reappearing in a familiar house I glared at Siletta as she smiled "Welcome home." She taunted. I grit my teeth "What's your reasoning for doing all of this?" I asked. Siletta girlishly pranced around the room she brought us to then stopping and looking at the opposite wall. "By now shouldn't it be obvious? I want to see her in pain like she was before she met _you people_." She answered in a low tone. "Back then she was powerful. But you and the Shinsengumi had to have her brother Kosu in your group, setting everything up for Shiro to stay with you. She plundered to such a low rank, it's unbelievable." Siletta turned to look at me but her body still faced away. "Also adding that I will use her to kill you, just like that time when she had to kill Ami you should have seen her face. She cried in agony for days in that house. Then her powers as a pureblooded demon increased by 10,000 in status, at that rank she even surpassed her own father's level of ability!" She let out a maniac laughter, "There's nothing you can do now, I will make you break your promise of protecting Shiro. I will mentally and physically torture you and Shiro for being so weak!"

I slam my hand into the wall creating a large hole in it. Siletta walked toward the door "You'll stay in here until it's needed for you to leave." She opened the door and closed it behind her leaving me alone in the empty room of where I used to live. The same House my sister and her family lived in before she passed away. When I still lived in her house this very room was where I slept, and now being locked up in this same room. It sickens me to remember the memory.

(Shiro's POV) Running to the main entrance to the town I slow my pace to a stop. Breathing deeply I look at the sky. It was getting darker, Souji has been gone for a few hours now and he hasn't come back yet. I start walking again out of the gates onto the bridge stopping halfway to look at the clear river. _'Was it possibly Siletta who took control over Souji? Now that he's gone where do I search for him?_' I thought to myself.

Continuing walking I enter the forest that surrounds the town Takumi lives in. I keep telling myself that everything will be okay soon. But I knew that it was going to be the opposite. Yet something was

telling me that something somewhere was already starting to happen for a miracle, don't ask me why I just do. And I hope that the feeling is true. While I was searching for Souji for days I couldn't come upon 1 single little clue about where he is. And now I think the miracle was just an illusion. And yet I will continue searching for Souji no matter how long it takes.

(Souji's POV) Already a few days passed since I was separated from Shiro. Siletta has been keeping check on me and the old house and bringing food for me. Every single day I've been either walking around the house or just practicing with the wooden swords I found. Whenever I asked for permission to leave the estate Siletta always declines, even just to a store she says that she would do it herself. And if you're thinking _'Why don't you just run away?_' I can't because that stupid woman can create barriers; every single time she leaves Siletta always makes sure that a barrier is surrounding the estate to keep me in. I discovered this the first attempt to leave.

I woke up in the middle of the night when I knew Siletta was gone. Getting up and dressed I quietly walked through the hallways to the main gate to leave. And when I tried to walk pass my face hit something invisible making me stumble back. I try walking through the gate again but the same thing happened: I was blocked from leaving. I tired other escape exits I found in the estate but I couldn't get through either. I figured Siletta had something to do with it, and when she returned for her daily check I didn't even have to ask her.

She had suspected me to leave before and told me about her other ability to create barriers, and now all I can do is wait. It's hard thinking of weaknesses for barriers when I only have a portion of Shiro's powers with me. Right now I just have to keep thinking and wait no matter how boring it is. But really she couldn't just walk with me to and from a walk to a simple store? How pathetic! I mean really she's so afraid of Shiro finding me that she isolates me from the whole world. Now that I'm thinking of her I hope that Shiro is alright. If Siletta did anything else to her I will tear her head clean off her body. I lean against the wall sitting down inside the house, closing my eyes and falling into slumber.

Three weeks later I wake up with my back sore against the wall as I stand up and open the door to look outside. The fresh breeze gently blows against my face, it is the afternoon meaning I slightly overslept. The breeze abruptly stopped, a white mist started forming 2 yards away from me. Siletta stood in front of me facing my right looking scornful. I lean against the side of the door, "What is it now?"

She flashed an angry-annoyed glance at me. "Somehow Shiro and your friends are on our trail, who knows how long it will take for them to find us? Moreover we will leave this place." "Ooh-kaay." I say yawning turning back into the room to take a nap even though I just woke up. "NOW!" she snapped. I stopped in my track looking back at her also with annoyance. "Fine, fine, just give me a minute." I was in a yukata she got for me when I said I needed one 7 months ago, and I'm changing into my usual clothing with green pants and reddish like shirt. She waited for me outside of my room. When I opened the door again I expected to see Siletta standing there scowling but it was Shiro. "Uh, Shiro?" Shiro's eyes watered as she said my name

"Souji." I was dazed right on the spot with questions _'How did she get here, and so fast? Where did Siletta go? And how did she find out where I was staying?'_

Shiro leapt forward making me fall back embracing me as if she'd never let go. "I was so worried about you the whole time, those months turning into a year." She said crying making her voice shaky. "I wondered where you were and if you were alright. I prayed every night that you'd be safe from Siletta's harm. I kept on thinking how foolish I was to not realize that you had been under Siletta's control that time. I really am a fool, why couldn't I protect you?!" She continued to sob, but strangely while she was my heart felt as if it had been released from a heavy weight. Unfortunately the moment couldn't last long enough. Siletta appeared in the doorway furious. "_Shiro_." She muttered glaring dangerously. Shiro stopped her tears standing up putting her arms up so that she was in a guarding position. "I will not let you imprison Souji anymore whether you've done anything horrible to him or not." Shiro glared, I think it beats Hijikata-san's glare. Siletta smirked "Huh, I didn't hurt him in any terrible way, at least not yet."

It was the last part was what worried me the most. Shiro closed her eyes for what seemed like long minutes then opened them slowly, her body was glowing a dark red color and her eyes changed colors from dark brown to dark hazy blue-purple. "Hmmm you've unleashed your demon powers? About time." Siletta did the same but the colors of eyes are different, they're red matching the glow. "You and uncle have caused enough scars in the lives I've been forced to live. I will eliminate you myself as well." Shiro announced sternly. Immediately they start battling and the problem was that the two were too fast to see. All I heard were just clashes of metal and once or twice fist contact. About that time was when everyone arrived and saw me in my room sitting on the floor.

"Okita-san!" Chizuru called. I poked my head outside to see the whole 'gang' running my way. "Thank goodness you're safe, it's all thanks to Shiro." Chizuru said panting. Still puzzled on how all of this took place I asked "How did Shiro find me? I haven't been out of this house since I was taken." I finally stood up. "We'll explain later right now we have to leave this battle to Shiro." Hijikata-san said. I nodded and went with them to the gate. But I paused making sure there was no barrier and there wasn't. Stepping through I felt free. Finally able to leave the house I stretch out and look back. I still faintly hear the clashing of weapons. Meaning that the battle isn't over? Even though I've finally been able to leave the house my gut is telling me to go back for Shiro.

Just about when I was going to dash back into the estate Harada-san holds me back by putting his hand on my shoulder. I look back at him, he had a serious and worried face on then he lets his hand fall back to his side slowly blinking and opening them. "We have to have faith in her. I know that it's been a year since you saw her, but as a husband you will have to wait. This time it will be Shiro who will truly decide our fates now." Staring into my eyes for a moment he looks behind me as if he's trying to look through the wall. I draw my fingers into a fist.

"Shiro you'd better come back alive and well." I mutter, standing in front of the gate with the others.

(Shiro's POV 6 months earlier) I get up at dawn again and start walking through town to listen to any rumors of Souji. Sadly through the weeks I have been repeating my routine and I heard nothing about him. And I guess everyone is concerned for both Souji and I because they seem to visit me more often.

They have been very helpful with helping me search after all Souji is still their friend. Without really knowing it I started staying up through the night and day. Then Hijikata, Saito, and Heisuke including Chizuru and Harada and pretty much the whole 'gang' were harping at me on how I should go back to sleeping regularly and that they're as worried as I am. But is that true? I've been with Siletta practically my whole life and I have accurate ideas of what she would do to Souji.

As time passed on 10 months went by. I will admit I am very worried and almost losing hope. But thanks to Chizuru and Heisuke they kept cheering me to hope and to keep searching for Souji. Waking up at dawn I get dressed and start walking down the usual path to the shops in town. I walked around 'till noon and rested in front of a dango shop. Listening I caught something interesting. A woman with a dark blue kimono spoke quietly behind the sleeve of her kimono to another woman probably just company. "I heard that a woman keeps on going to a store to buy strange things like a men's yukata and sandals and large amounts of food." The other one in pink asked "Does anyone know why?" The dark blue kimono lady whispered back "Others say that she answered it was for an ill cousin some say that she's just a strange woman who just wear men's clothing." The one in pink asked back, "Where did that happen?" "In Osaka. Nobody knows where she lives though." Immediately I bolt up and start running back to headquarters. _'I need to tell everyone what I just heard.'_ Fast walking I slow my pace until I could see the gates.

When I was about to enter in the meeting room Heisuke came calling me, "Shiro-chan have you heard anything?" I look his way and put on a small smile, "Yes, I heard a rumor and I need everyone to be in the meeting room right now. Please go tell the others." With a nod Heisuke ran back, hearing his footsteps echo and stopping. I nod to myself and continue in the room setting up the zabutons for the captains.

Half an hour later all the captains came through the door, almost literally. "You heard something about Souji?!" Kondou blurted when he entered looking just as anxious as everyone else. Sitting crisscross resting my right arm on my leg I motion for them to sit first. Quickly they all sat down staring at me. I take a deep breath, "It may be related to Siletta and Souji but I just heard a while ago some women were talking about another woman who was buying a men's sleeping yukata and large amounts of food. I can only guess that Siletta was so worried that we'd find them she probably locked up Souji in a house somewhere in Osaka if I recall correctly." I say putting my index finger to my chin thinking back. "So Okita-san just may be in Osaka with Siletta?" Harada asked. I nodded. "But, even if it is true Siletta will be more alert if she hears about any person going to her 'hideout'. We have to create a distraction long enough for my powers to sense his presence.

Including the problem that she can somewhat sense my presence, after all she _was_ a part of me, until she found a way to separate herself." I look around everyone's looks became more doubtful and

serious each passing minute. I close my eyes rethinking what I just said and reopened them. "You all don't have to come if you're that busy or if you think it's a waste of time. But whether any of you guys are coming or not, I'll be ready to leave to Osaka in 2 days to look for him there." I get up and walk to the door, pausing before closing it keeping it half way open. "Oh and just to tell you all a fact, I will not hesitate toâ€¦" I stop for a moment thinking of the word. "to leave if it means you guys will be safe from harm." I finish quietly closing the door.

Walking away I smile to myself. _'There is little chance that I will be able to get Souji and keep everyone safe. Silletta will just keep coming after us. Then everyone will have no peace in their lives, when I do find Souji and make sure he's safe. I'll go and kill Silletta, which means I'd also kill myself. I don't think our links are completely separate. If that was the case she wouldn't be able to sense my presence. Whether she can or not I don't want to risk my friends' safety.'_ I straighten my back and shoulders walking prideful back to my room.

During the next morning to afternoon I packed the necessary clothes and things I would need for a couple months. Everyone seemed to have all their attention on me for some reason the whole time I was packing, but I pushed it aside and later when I was done went for lunch. I will admit it felt weird going for a lunch break from HQ when you feel like your friends are stalking you. After getting something to eat I sat by the river under the main bridge. It was one of my favorite places to be.

Calmly and steadily I finish my food and decide to sit longer in that spot. I put my arms back using them to prop myself up as I lean back, listening to the loud sounds of people talking and walking. After about half an hour later I walk back to HQ first to see Chizuru whistling and sweeping. I raise my brow as I walk through back to my room. _'Since when could Chizuru whistle?'_ I thought, sitting down next to my desk rethinking the face Chizuru had on. And will say that she did look nervous. I shake my head, feeling tired for some reason then taking a nap.

Slowly opening my eyes I find myself sitting up still next to my desk in my dim lit room. I went to a cabinet that had a futon, blankets, and a pillow. After retrieving the items I set up my futon just in case I wanted to go back to bed. Then I just sat quietly in my room against the wall trying to distract myself from thinking of Souji. A minute or two passed by when I heard familiar voices slurring, like they were drunk. I figured that Harada, Shimpachi, and Heisuke were out drinking heavily again. I sigh "Honestly when will they stop drinking so much? They're gonna have terrible headaches in the morning after their hangover." I comment to myself. Knowing them no matter how drunk they were that trio always found their way to their rooms. I sigh deeply, falling asleep once more.

I wake up knowing that it was the day I leave for Osaka. Getting all of my stuff together I walk out to the main gate. I pass right in to the front and turned to look back. _'I won't be here in a while. I hope everyone here can live as happily as they can.'_ I thought to myself. Then walking off disappearing into the early morning crowd, my steps being overpowered by the loud noise of people talking and walking along, _'I'll walk for days and nights if I have to, if that's what it takes to get to Osaka.'_

It took a few days to arrive there in Osaka. Immediately I search for an inn I can stay in for the time being. Searching I find a nice inn that seemed rather quiet enough for me to sleep in for days without much interference. A woman who worked at the inn showed me to my room and left me in peace. I search in the small cabinet and grab a futon and blanket. Carelessly, I toss them as neat as I could onto the nicely lined tatami mats. After doing that 'chore' I let myself fall onto the futon, I quickly grab the blanket covering myself. As tired as I was I couldn't sleep. It had already been 8 and a half months and there was hardly any sign of Souji or Siletta.

I deeply and slowly sigh to myself planning of what I will do in the next 2 days or so when I am fully recuperated. My eyelids feeling heavy I close them.

About another month later I find a temporary house to rent. After cleaning the house I set off to buy groceries. I walk to the town market to the stalls I usually go to, and I guess I visited them a lot more than I thought because the people working there seemed to know me as if I was a friend dropping by. From time to time they'd give me a piece of the best vegetables and fish or meat for free. I was glad since it would mean I can save more money.

After getting all of what I needed for the whole week I start my way back to the house I rented. Walking halfway back I see someone I'd never thought I'd ever see, it was Siletta asking for 13 pounds of meat. This town really has a lot of shops and stalls for food and clothes and other things. Luckily I was far enough so Siletta couldn't sense my presence. I tailed her until a certain point where she just vanished. Every time I go for groceries I'd always look out for her, and when I did find her she'd vanish again when I was so close. I continued this 'routine' for nearly 2 months.

Another week later while cleaning the floors I hear a group of people walking in calling my name in familiar voices, which lifted my spirit. I haven't seen them in 3 months straight. "Hey Shiro?! Are you here?" Heisuke shouted. Smiling wide I go to a corner which is about the one they were about to go to. "Everyone, it's been a while! I can't believe you guys found me." I exclaim. Kondou was meekly rubbing the back of his head "Yeah, it took a while. We went around town asking about you and giving descriptions of you. A woman running a vegetable stand told us of a girl who looked like you so we assumed it had to be you. But we had to ask more people for information of why you were staying. A man said that he heard about us and told us that he let a woman rent his house while he was staying at his aunt's place. He gave us directions which led us here." Kondou explained.

My eyes soften for a moment but changed into seriousness looking downward. "As it turns out the rumor is true Siletta is hiding somewhere here. I saw her getting her own groceries, but I could never follow her all the way, she'd disappear." I glance at their faces. "Well, now you have our help. Finding Souji shouldn't take long." Harada said confidently. But for some reason knowing that Souji was still alive and my friends coming here to support me, I feel horrible. Tears were about to fall from my eyes, I quickly wipe them away. "Eh, what's wrong Shiro?" Shinpachi asked with a tone of concern. I turn my face so that they couldn't see it, "Even though my best friends are here and knowing that Siletta still has Souji alive,

I just feel sad. It feels like my heart will shatter this time and never heal. I feel like all of you are out of reach too, like you're all next to me but you don't know who I am like you guys will disappear. This feeling.." I stopped, my body starts to tremble doing my best to hold back the tears. "Shiro." Chizuru quietly whispered. "It's killing me, that feeling I had long ago when I was a captive experiment. I just want to let go, but it won't release me it has always stayed deep in my heart. I don't think I can take this anymore." I say in a weak raspy voice shaking my head.

"He's nearly been gone for a year and the more I think of him the more I feel like breaking." I admit defeatingly. I felt a strong hand on my head I turn to look at Kondou. He smiled assuring "Souji's a strong man he will wait however long it takes to find him. We will find him soon." I force my lips to smile. "Yes, you're right."

The next 3 weeks we followed Siletta and finally we found her hiding spot. The next day I planned a way to distract Siletta while I search for Souji. Once everything was overlooked we headed out at night another 4 days later. Appearing at the entrance I signal the group to start their distraction act, as I planned Siletta came out to look for the noise makers. As soon as she was out I sensed Souji's presence. '_There he is! I can't believe we've gone this far.'_

(Present time) Siletta and I both clash our weapons together trying to break each other's block. Second to minutes passed by too long, we were going nowhere. I have to do something. I might have to kill Siletta with a demon gate summoning but that would take a lot of energy even for me. Also I would have to use the remaining to energy to save everyone in this area so they won't be affected. And also when Siletta dies, I will choose to die with her. Living as long as the world survives with humans, thousands to millions of years it's too much to bear. How can I still live on when all I've seen is sorrow, fear and pain? It's a curse I wish it was never bestowed upon me in the first place!

As I used a spell to hold Siletta down for a while a giant crack appeared on the ground and grew larger and wider. A giant came out from the large crack and pulled Siletta in along with it as the spell on her wore off. Siletta clawed the ground screaming, "I'll get you back! I swear I'll get you back for this! Curse you Shiro, CURSE YOU!" She screeched. Now the crack and giant and Siletta disappeared.

I turned around and saw Souji looking at me. "Souji!" I stopped. '_Should I even tell him that I'll kill myself? Did I even tell him that I was immortal? And come to think of it I don't think I've ever told him through the 2 years we've been together. How should I tell him I want to leave earth? And just go to where ever my soul will take me whether it's the underworld or heaven? I don't think I'd want to see him in pain but it's not right to just take him with me, I have to think about everyone.'_ "Shiro." Souji called walking my way. I froze staring back at him. "Souji, I won't be around anymore from tomorrow on." He stopped and stared back at me while I looked away.

"What do you mean by that?" He asked quizzically. I turn my back toward him "I don't think I've told you but I'm immortal. And I've been living ever since humans walked the earth. To you may be living

for eternity is a good thing, but to those who've actually been forced to live for such a long period of time. It's horrible!" I stop halfway because the feeling tugging at me made my eyes water and my voice shaky and unbalanced. "all you feel is sadness and pain. You live longer than the ones you love and you see more pain and sorrow in the world."

I wipe away my tears, "It was nice meeting you, Souji. You've been a great husband although we've hardly had time for each other but remember I'll always be with you in spirit." The pain and weight from my shoulders seemed to have been lifted off. "Shiro you're not going to kill yourself are you?! Why would you do such a thing? When you've gone this far and found happiness, you're just going to throw them away!?" I take a deep breath "Then if you don't want me to die you and everyone else has to forget me. For your curse to wear off and everyone else's it's best to forget. It'll be much easier." I say with fake confidence.

I turn back and see Souji's hands in fists. "It may be less painful for us but what about you? Why can't you find a way to dispel the curse?" I shake my head. "No there's hardly any chance that you can dispell to destroy the curse it's unknown." I shake my head defiantly. Souji looks behind him. It's quiet what happened to the others?" I look behind him as well, "I created a barrier to keep them out, it was supposed to keep you out too." I admitted sadly. He looked back at me seeming like he's never seen me like this before, which is true. "If you don't want me to kill myself then I'll have to erase your memories along with anyone else that has seen or known me." His eyes widen then he slowly became angry and sad.

"I did not chose to marry you so that you'd leave us behind, I wanted to spend time with you, and now when it's the perfect time to do that you choose to just leave?! Why would you make us go through all of that we care about you Shiro. Why do you want to shatter that dream we all had?" I shut my eyes tight holding back the tears I wanted to shed. '_I have to do this! I don't want to see another day when my friends die.'_ I told myself. After the thought of everything we've been through I set up the spell for mind erasing and cast it.

"Good-bye, I miss every one of you." Everything turning white and fading.

* * *

><p>Hi guys. Like I said before I'm gonna need more ideas after this one and another. But anyways I hope you guys enjoyed my story. Please review! Sorry for saying this at such a late time. And if I typed anything wrong (you know what I mean) please say so in the review box thingy. Bye^.^<p>

7. Chapter 7

(4 years later, Souji's POV) It was my units' turn to go patrolling through town. We always take turn with units but this time of year it feel like forever. With the sun beating down on us some of the young women around 17-20 kept on gawking at us when we do our patrols.

After walking in the sun for hours we went back to headquarters. Entering the front gate Shinpachi comes up to me "Hey, Souji wanna join me Heisuke and Harada tonight? We're going to the best geisha house in Osaka!" He exclaimed. I stared at him blankly then shrug. "I guess it wouldn't hurt." I answer.

Later that night all the unit captains, vice commander and Chizuru walked to the geisha house. After letting a geisha show us to our room we ordered for the food and sake for the moment, the geisha nodded and left quietly. I eyed my seat and took it leaning back. "Oi, Chizuru-chan bet you envy the beautiful geisha here huh?" I tease. Chizuru blushed bright "Eh?! N-no of course not." She replied nervously, Hijikata on the other hand was giving me his usual death glare. I lightly chuckle "Oh c'mon Hijikata-san I was just kidding. You know if you keep glaring like that you'll never get a girl to like you." I muse with a smirk. "Souji if you keep saying things like that to Chizuru I'll kill you." Hijikata said grumpily. My smirk disappears as I fake my hurt feelings "Aww, Hijikata you took my line. I am offended I've never hurt Chizuru in any way at all." I say dramatically. Hijikata-san kept on glaring at me as I smile, just when he was about to say something a geisha brought in our food and sake. She sets the food in order and sake then bows down and leaves. Immediately Heisuke and Shinpachi start drinking the sake one bottle after another. "Geez you guys can't hold your alcohol." I comment. "Oh, c'mon Souji *hiccup* try some they're very good. They burn down ya throat but it's very satisfying." Heisuke slurred already becoming drunk, the same goes for Shinpachi. "Ya Heisuke's right Souji, man haha this sake is the best!" Shinpachi shouts halfway. I raise my brow and slowly stand up, "Well since this room already smells like the booze itself I'm going out for fresh air." Turning around to open the door I step outside in the night feeling a light breeze passing by.

I walk over and take a seat by the window and gaze down at the busy streets. "Even at night time the streets are still busy." I mumble to myself. When a few minutes went by I got up and decided to go back to the room. I get halfway when I see a geiko wearing the most beautiful elaborate purple and blue kimono walking this way I stop and gaze at her. She continues to walk but stops in front of me and I don't know if it was my eyes or my face it seemed as if her eyes widen a fraction before going back to its normal size. She smiled kindly "Are you enjoying your stay here?" she asks, I couldn't say anything for some reason but the first thing I said that came out of my mouth was "Have I met you before?" After the words came out I mentally punched myself for asking a strange question back, I straighten myself "Sorry for asking you that, but yes I'm enjoying the time here."

"I'm glad; I hope you and your friends have a wonderful evening." She replied calmly bowing slightly. Then it felt like something hit me "How did you know that I came with others?" I ask eyeing her surprised face. Almost too soon her expression is calm again "Well you just don't seem to be one who would go drinking alone." She simply answered. About to leave I ask her one last question, "Wait." She stops and looks back as if waiting for me to say something else. "What's your name?" I inquire, even though about 2 yards away I could see that she had a small smile when I asked the question. Turning so her body was facing me again she slowly blinked "It's Shiro." The second she said her name my head starts pounding like I've been hit with metal poles or something. I stagger back leaning against the wall and for some reason I start breathing hard as if I'm

suffocating.

Shiro gasped and ran to my side helping me stand. "Are you okay?" She asked worriedly. And for another odd reason I feel like I've heard her voice somewhere before. Shiro about to yell for help the rest of the Shinsengumi unit captains came running my way. Shiro immediately left my side when my comrades were close enough. "Souji are you okay?!" Heisuke questioned alarmed. Then my breathing slows down to a normal rate and my head felt like nothing had ever happened. I look around in the lantern lit hallway for Shiro, but she wasn't around. "Hey that geiko that was with you did you know her Souji?" Harada asked curiously with a hint of suspicion. I shake my head "No, I've never met her before but I feel like I have met her, somewhere." I say trailing off. "Well I think we've had enough sake for the night let's go back to headquarters." Shinpachi suggested. Which I think is quite rare since he's more of one to stay with sake and women more than the rest of us. "Yeah, I'm going back. I'm already tired." I lie. Tomorrow I don't have patrol which means I can look for Shiro then. 'But what was that feeling when she said her name? Shiro, Shiro, I'm sure I've heard of her name, but darn it I can't remember!' I walk out of the geisha house and head for headquarters.

(Souji's room in headquarters after the geisha house) 'A young woman sitting up with an infant girl in a room, but the baby didn't cry. The room shook violently, the house starting to crumble her mother mumbling something and the baby gone. It quickly moved to a different scene with things I've never seen before but there was a girl alone at night next to what seems like a glowing metal lamp. She's leaning on the pole with one knee propped up and an arm resting on it. Her face contorted with sadness and pain. Then I realize that her left arm that was at her side was bleeding. It blurred into a different scene in a strange metal-made room. The girl was the same only a little bit older maybe about 7?_ - "AHHH!" A loud scream of pain escaped the girls' mouth as a man heavily armed pulled her arms back hearing them crack. Looking closer I realized next that the little girl looked just like Shiro. I wanted to punch the guy till his head connected with the wall but when I tried to I ran right through the girl and the man. The little Shiro was gritting her teeth as the man laughed maniacally. Then it was completely white for a few seconds then I was standing in a field and saw Shiro again this time around 8 or 9 in the field sitting down. I walk over to look and saw a corpse that didn't die too long ago. "I'm sorry Ami this is all my fault if only we hadn't met." Shiro stopped and continued to cry. The whole scene changed again and this time it was horrible, fire everywhere people screaming the sky dark, yet again I found Shiro when she is 10. She was screaming "No, please uncle stop this! Please, please leave them alone." She begged to a man who was in a black cloak splattered with dried blood. His hood lowered as if he was looking at Shiro then he vanished his voice echoing 'I'll make you suffer more my dear Shiro. It's far from over for you.' Shiro screamed in pain and sorrow that somehow reached my heart. Then the scene changed again, oddly this time Shiro was older close to my age 4 years ago and she was next to me. We were smiling, and then it changed to two Shiro's fighting.' I bolted up from my futon. Gasping I get up and go sit outside of my room on the wooden railing. Confused and frustrated I comb through my hair with my hand taking a deep breath. "What's going on with me? Now I'm even dreaming about a geisha I just met?" Leaning back on the wooden pole supporting the ceiling I gaze at the courtyard. Quiet, dim, moon lit, light breezes, stones

glinting, I should come out more often.

I continue to stare at the quiet and peaceful scenery. I take one last deep breath and go back inside and went to sleep.

(In the afternoon, Souji's POV) Last night's dream had me wanting to ask Shiro millions and millions of questions. For some reason I have a gut feeling that she knows all the answers to them. At lunch time I ate with the unit captains and left after I finished my meal. Walking in town and asking for Shiro wasn't the hardest thing to do. I still remembered which one the geisha house she was in and headed there. Entering through the entrance a geisha came to me and asked if I needed anything. I nod "I'm looking for a geisha named Shiro. Is she here?" I politely ask.

The geisha gave me a nervous look "Well, you see Shiro is out and is returning back to her home until it's her turn to come back and work." I arch my brow "But aren't geisha's supposed to stay in the house they work in unless they get permission to leave? Why does Shiro get to leave so easily than others?" I ask. The geisha looked behind her and sideways as if she's afraid of being heard, she leaned in towards me and whispered "Shiro is the finest dancer and also at playing the shamisen she is the very key to why this place is becoming famous and due to her being ranked higher than the rest of us she has more freedom. I don't know why she continues to work here when she has no debt but Shiro seems to have made some sort of deal with the master who owns this place. All we know is that Shiro has a powerful status and she is valued. We all worship her, no matter how high of a status she has she has a pure and kind heart." The geisha finished. I think of the information she gave me and registered it in my memory. "Do you know where I can find Shiro?" I ask the geisha looked surprised as I follow her stare to the young woman behind me. She too also looked surprised, it was Shiro dressed in a less elegant kimono with her hair up in a simple bun.

"You." She said still dazed. "Shiro." I whispered. Shiro shook her head and smiled "Well I didn't expect to see you again. Did you want to speak with me about something?" Shiro inquired looking curious. I nod "Yes but can we please speak in private?" Shiro nodded. She walked over to the geisha in front of me and handed her a bag of groceries. "Please help cook for everyone I'll be back soon." After giving the geisha the groceries Shiro nodded toward me and walked out the of the geisha house, I followed.

On the way Shiro spoke "We're almost at my home." "Mm." I reply. We were quiet again for a while until Shiro broke the silence once more "Why did you want to see me today? Was there something else you wanted to know?" She asked looking back at me. I look at her then looked away "The truth is that last night after I met you I had a dream. It was at first a girl who looked like you going through depressing troubles at a young age, it started around the time you were supposedly born then in the end it showed that you and I were together and the last part were two of you fighting each other." I answered. Shiro stopped and I looked ahead, a large estate grandly decorated with light colored flowers and green grass around the stone paths. "We're here." Shiro announced.

Shiro showed me the way in and led me to an empty room. She puts the zabuton across from each other then gestures for me to sit. Once we did she started the conversation "Don't worry the neighbors are not

home currently and no one's here either I live alone. So you can ask me anything." I nodded "I want you to tell the truth about what I am going to ask." She looked serious at me then gestured me to go on. "Do you know who I am and the other Shinsengumi captains?" She took a deep breath looking at the tatami mat and answered "Yes. We did used to live together with the others." Shocked my eyes widen to the information. "I never thought I'd have to erase your memory again, Souji." Questions raced around my head and I blurted "Exactly what relationship were we then? And how .how did we forget you but you still remember us?" I asked eager for her to answer immediately.

"Because you all would in the brink of death, I did not want to go back to those days when I'd lose all of my most precious friends and comrades, a certain curse will destroy all those whom I care about and will continue to kill them again and again no matter how many relationships I've made the black curse set upon me will remain with me as long as I am alive." I paused recalling the dream a little bit I remember the end "But none of us seemed to be on the brink of death in my dream. So why was it still necessary to erase our minds?" She blinked and looked away "A fallen demon bound by my blood because of my uncle would have come after you and the Shinsengumi and at that time I couldn't use my full power because the demon always takes more of my energy to leave the depths of the underworld and to use its power again for so many times over the years I was alive." I clenched my hands into fists.

"So you knew us before and I take it that we also used to be closer than friends with you and me. What exact relationship were we in, Shiro?" She stared down at the tatami mat again and looked up "We were actually just married and with the others my greatest friends." I lean back further. "So then who was this other person who looked like you do you have a twin sister?" Shiro's sad expression became serious with regret. "That person was Sileta the one who took you and hid you away from me, she used to be a part of me but she somehow found a way to separate from me." I gasp with pain as the memories came rushing back. The spell wore off. "Shiro," I slam my fist to the floor. "You were alone, for 4 years you were watching us from afar didn't you. And I didn't even remember anything!" Shiro looked sad again "It wasn't your fault I erased your memory along with the others so that you all won't have to suffer about me." A tear slipped down her cheek. I got up and walked towards Shiro, kneeling down and embracing her. "Souji." She slurred without really realizing it.

She twisted and turned pushing me away "This isn't right! You shouldn't have remembered! You should have just minded your own business and kept working on normally for the Shinsengumi. You should have just found someone else who would have made you happier than I could ever to you." She sobbed falling to her knees trying her best to hold back tears welling in her beautiful dark amber eyes. I sighed in my playful manner "C'mon cheer up. I promise I will break your chains of grief and captivity. I'll make sure you won't have to remember those horrible childhood memories." I say with determination. I get close to Shiro again and embrace her tighter, Shiro didn't really move at all she just kept on her knees.

Slowly I felt her arms on my back "I've missed the Souji who knew who I was." Shiro murmured. "I've missed you too." I admit which can be rare for me. "Souji do you really want to remember me? Would you do anything to have our memory with everyone else instead of you living

a normal samurai life with the Shinsengumi now? You should be carefully choosing this decision; sometimes its family that counts more than friends but that could also be the opposite." Shiro paused and looked into my eyes. "If you choose to protect Chizuru and the Shinsengumiâ€¦..abandon me, just forget this had never happened and move on." Shiro said solemnly.

My hands twitched "But we're still married and the Shinsengumi are my family. Why do I even have to choose?" Shiro just looked at me and got up, walking to a window opening it just a few inches. "This is a demon matter we're talking about, it won't be a normal thing to just forget and go live an easy life. The curse I've been placed with will last as long as I live I believe I might have told you that before." She stopped and leaned against the wall. "The details of this curse are that if I've made any friends or any sort of relationship with anyone those people will die by the wish of that idiotic uncle. Now that I've been through the effects of the curse and have grown more powerful over time I can prevent its killing so that one person who I truly care about can live beside me, but the cost is that the one I love will have to abandon his life with the people he is close by such as his comrades. And I will have to erase everyone else's memories so the curse's affects won't befall them." Shiro explained, and not once did she look at me when she said it.

"You know if you could even bend the effect of the curse you could have destroyed it yourself. That's how powerful you are." I say encouraging. It went quiet then I heard sniffing. I look over at Shiro, her hand over her face tears falling and her body slightly shaking. "You don't know. I'm not that strong. Don't say things that aren't true." Shiro said in a shaky voice slowly falling to the floor gasping. She continued to cry and a feeling in my gut tells me there's something Shiro didn't tell me. "Shiro what is it? What info did you leave out?" I ask walking to her side and sitting next to her.

Shiro wiped away the tears but they keep on falling "When I erased all of your memories of me along with the Shinsengumi 4 years agoâ€¦ my demonic energy and powers it allâ€¦.. it all-" Shiro paused taking deep breathes and crying. "It all disappeared." Shiro ended cradling her knees and resting her head on top. I was confused, _'Why is it so depressing? Does her energy and power have to do with something important?'_

"But then what harm will it do to you?" I thought out loud. Shiro stiffened and looked up "It means I don't have long to live." After what came out of Shiro's mouth I was stiff as well. "I know that I don't want to live for eternity but now that I've met you and the Shinsengumi and Chizuru I just don't want to go." I stand up facing away from Shiro. "How long do you have to live?" I ask in a low voice afraid of the answer. "I'm guessing I have only 1 week left till I disappear too." Shiro answered weakly. My eyes widen, I thought of ways to stop her from dying but Shiro is a demon, and I don't know the kind of matters or things you have to do to stop powerful curses or spells casted on by another demon.

"There has to be a way to stop it from killing you. You were alone for so long and now to just disappear because you wanted the best for me and the Shinsengumi. Your uncle doesn't deserve to just die he deserves to suffer FOREVER!" I hiss. I relax regaining myself. "Shiro let's go see the others." I suggest comfortingly. She sighed and

continued to take deep breathes "But do they remember me? And even if they do somehow regain their memories there's really nothing you guys could do for me." I clench my hands into fists "Yes we can. We'll have more memories together no matter how little time we have. We'll find a way to stop the curse from destroying you you'll get your powers back and everything will go back to the way it was." I say as confident as I could but even I was about to cry.

I turn to look at Shiro behind me; she's looking out the window the moonlight reflecting her face full of pain, sorrow and worry. "When someone dies some people say 'Remember that they lived or think about their death, Think of the memories that you had together or choose to worry about the pain, Move on from the dead or stay attached.' But I think that those people who say things like that are wrong." My eyes soften as I sit back down next to Shiro. "How are you not supposed to be sad?! They make it sound like they don't care it's stupid to say things like that to a person who is in mourning over their loved one. And if they don't care why not mind their own business?!" Shiro's body began to shake more; carefully I put my arm around her shoulders for more comfort. "Don't worry, I swear to protect you. You won't die and that is a fact." Holding her closer my heart felt as if I was already holding a ghost.

We continued to gaze at the stars above; Shiro fell asleep though leaving me awake to see her adorable sleeping face. She looked calm and happy and that's what I always want it to be for her.

(Shiro's POV) I knew I shouldn't have lied. It's true that 4 years ago I lost all of my demonic energy and powers but the time when I'd die is less than a week away. Of course they would have thought I would live on forever, but every spell that has made people or demons immortal can be broken. For me ever since I killed my uncle years ago my curse of living for eternity was lifted, but somehow the other curse he set upon me still remained. He's still a stubborn dummy, making sure I wouldn't have friends or comrades by my side when I needed it the most.

Now when I've lived for so long and have finally found friends again yet only to die after saving them. _'I'm such a fool. Why did I think I could be free? It's only a fleeting thought.'_ Waking up in Souji's arms I remember what happened yesterday. He's fast asleep no doubt about it. _'By now the spell in the others should have worn off too.'_ I look out the window, it's already noon. I get up and go cook something to eat while Souji's still asleep and make some for him too when he wakes up. I wonder _'Will my time come to an end?'_ Working in the kitchen for half an hour then eating in the dining room I go and check on Souji. He stirs and becomes still, I chuckle. Quietly I walk next to him gently pushing aside his bangs. His eyes slowly fluttering open turning to look at me I smile and sit down.

"You awake now sleepy head?" I greet. "Mmmm Shiro I'm still tired." Souji replied in a sleepy tone. He sits up straight then leans forward to me. "Ahh?! Souji c'mon get up it's already past noon. Let's go back to the Shinsengumi." I urge supporting him up. He looks at me sideways "What made you want to go back so soon? I thought you'd stay here for another 2 days or something." I put on a fake smile "Well; now I only have 6 days left to live why not visit them early and check on them?" I answer as happily as I could. Souji narrows his eyes at me.

"You sure it's not something else?" He asked raising a brow suspiciously. I turn my head to look at him. "Of course not, why is there something wrong?" I inquire sounding a hint of nervous. Souji cast his eyes forward. "It seems like you were hiding something again." I look forward too. My smile slowly disappears into a slight frown.

"What made you think that?" I ask looking more downward. "The look in your eyes, it just feels like it's telling me that you're hiding something like last night. You looked like you were about to say something else." A small smile forms on my lips. "I'm glad you're worried about me, but I think you should worry more about the others. You know you sorta disappeared on them didn't you? You know to find me." Souji puts on a relaxing smile then a curious expression "Oh yeah speaking of which are you still going to work for that geisha house?" I lift my head up "No not anymore. I made a deal with the master of who owns the geisha house that if I made that place more popular I would have more freedom and am allowed to quit when I've completed my deal. So now I can go tell him that I'll quit. And think you could stand on your own now?"

Souji chortles "Nah, I'm still sleepy because of you. You have to drag me all the way to headquarters." He jokes. "All the way to Kyoto!?" I joke back and smile wide after. Then he stands up and carefully pulled his arm away and walks on his own. "Shiro how long to you really have left to live?" I stop walking and stand. "Why do you ask I already told you." He stops and suddenly looks seriously at me. "No you're still hiding something. What is it?" My hands start to tremble, "Do I really have to say it? It would be better if it wasn't mentioned." I stall. Souji walks closer to me and stops just a few feet away. "Spill it. You haven't told me the truth about it."

I turn around putting on the angriest act I could muster, "So what does it have to do with you? It's not like it's your life that's wilting away. And it's my choice whether to say it or not. You can't always force people to say things you know." I say crossing my arms. "Since when were you so rebellious? As long as I could remember you'd always get along with me and everyone else. And also why shouldn't I know? I don't want to see to someone I care about dying in front of me one day." My body now shaking I run away hearing Souji call my name.

A few minutes went by when I stopped running, looking around I found myself in the middle of town where it's mostly the busiest. _'I'm sorry Souji. I just can't bring myself to say it.' _Walking to an ally way I lean against the wall in its shadow, my feet beginning to slowly disappear. Gasping my breathing calms down as I relax when cool breezes went by. Immediately I feel a familiar evil aura appearing in front of me. Its fuzzy black glow becomes a human figure. I glare at him "You." I hiss.

The man merely shrugged it away "My my, is that a nice way of greeting your uncle? You sure haven't changed much." My glare doubles "How are you alive? I killed you years ago." His low laughter echoed the empty ally way. "Why of course I sent a portion of my life force into your weapon. So when you're at the verge of dying I can come back to life and." I raise my brow, "and?" He smirked, "And make a deal with you." I eyes widen a fraction then narrow. "What kind of deal are you talking about?" I ask eyeing him. "Well something like: you give me your demonic energy and powers then I will lift the curse

I've set on you and make you a mortal with live happily with your little 'family.'" He smugly answered.

"Ch, yeah right. I will never give you my powers and demonic energy someone like you, I'd rather die with my friends safe from harm than give up of being a demon princess and giving you my demon abilities. Even I know it's risky you idiot." He wagged his finger "Ah ah ahhh. Just look at yourself now you're almost completely gone from this world and I'm still alive meaning your friends could be in danger." I look down and he was right, nearly half of my body has disappeared including my hands.

"Now little girl your time is almost up. What do you choose?" He smiled gaily. I grit my teeth. _'What do I do?'_

* * *

><p>Hi guys. Now it will take a while from this pont on since I have to plan the future of this story. Unless you guys have any ideas please tell me either pm or review, thanks for reading I hope you guys liked it so far.<p>

8. Chapter 8

This chapter is going to be the last one for this seires. I might write another seires or sequel to this but it depends on if i can have any more ideas. I do not own the Hakuouki characters, only Shiro.

* * *

><p>Slowly my waist disappears, uncle standing in front of me. He looked at me in the eyes and sighed "It seems you've made your mind. I am not needed here." He turns around but I grab his left arm. He glanced back at me narrowing his eyes trying to shove away my grasp but I don't let go. "What have you changed your mind?" He hissed clearly annoyed of me holding him back from his awaiting destruction. "If I die you'll have to follow." I say, but then I realize something. 'How am I using my hands? Weren't they supposed to have disappeared a while ago? ' Uncle looked shocked as well. Then slowly his hands disappeared. "What on earth!" he yelled. I finally let go and see that my body had reappeared once again. I looked back for my uncle but he completely disappeared.

Not really realizing what I've done I run back to headquarters to see if everyone was alright. I found them all in the courtyard looking confused. I sigh in relief and smile running towards them. "Hey, you guys alright?" They all looked at me with surprise and suspicion. I stop a few feet from them. "What's wrong why are you guys looking at me like that?" Hijikata unsheathed his katana and pointed my way. "What is an intruder like you doing here?" He coldly asks. I stood still and glance at Souji who was also giving me that glare. I take a few steps back, "But how could you not remember? Souji are you-"He narrowed his eyes at me while his glaring worsened, "How do you know my name?" He interrupted starting to unsheathe his katana.

I was frozen in place. _'What happened?! What made him forget me again? I don't get it. What caused them to forget me this time?_' I thought. And I kept thinking if ideas but they didn't lead to this.

"You guys really don't remember do you?" They all stare at me like I'm crazy. Hijikata sheathed his sword but he continued to glare at me, "Leave now or we will cut you down."

I knew that I couldn't make them remember so I turned around for my leave. "Trust me, I wanted to be cut down long ago." I say under my breath. '_But I will find a way to make you all remember. I promise.'_ I walk out of the gates and glance back. "I know it will be a long time before I can make you all remember, but please wait for me." I say looking at the place one last time and left.

I don't know where I'll go now, but I will watch them from afar. And I will find out why they have forgotten me again. But this time, I'll make them remember. Unlike the people from my past who have forgotten me I _will_ make them remember me, even if it's the last thing I do.

* * *

><p>Yeah I know it's the shortest chapter in this whole story but I couldn't think of anything else for the moment. Though I might maybe in the future I can write a sequel or more series to this story. Well thanks to the people who have read my story to this very point. For now I will end this story and continue with the other one. See you 'till then.<p>

End
file.